# THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES

OF

# HYDERABAD

Volume II

# THE REDDIS

OF THE

# BISON HILLS

MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.
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1945

# THE REDDIS
## OF THE
# BISON HILLS

*A Study in Acculturation*

BY

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*in collaboration with*

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*With a Foreword*

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*to the Government of Assam*

84 *Illustrations and* 5 *Maps*

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To

Sir THEODORE and Lady TASKER

in memory of their visit to

the Reddi Country

# FOREWORD.

Until Dr. von Fürer-Haimendorf turned his attention to its problems Hyderabad was almost a *terra incognita* to anthropologists. Now, after completing a standard work on the food-gathering Chenchus, he has given scientists and the general public an invaluable description of the almost equally primitive Reddis. To appreciate the importance of a work of this nature to the student of mankind it is only necessary to realise that it deals with what are virtually living fossils. To the Reddis the Aryan incursion is a thing of yesterday; they are not only older than the Dravidians, but belong to a culture stratum which even antedates that of the Neolithic Austroasiatics who form such an important element in the primitive tribes as far South as the Godavari. We are apt to think of " wild Nagas " and the like as truly primitive, but, as the author points out, the contrast between the Reddis with their digging-sticks and the hoe-using Nagas is as great as that between the latter and plough cultivators.

It may be truly said therefore that the Reddis are a remnant of the true aboriginal population of India, to whom all others are new-comers. But this is very far from meaning that they have remained uninfluenced by their more advanced neighbours who have occupied the fertile plains and valleys. These neighbours have brought with them new wants and new economic methods and, as only too often is the case, exploitation. The tale of land alienation and virtual serfdom is a piteous one, and though the Reddis had a true friend and adviser in the Swami of Parantapalli he was powerless to give them effective help till Dr. von Fürer-Haimendorf had submitted proposals for reform to the Government of Hyderabad, who readily accepted them. The effect of these reforms was instantaneous, and the author and his wife must have felt rewarded for the wearisome months of detailed study in a notoriously bad climate.

Thanks are due to the Government of His Exalted Highness the Nizam for the publication of a book which will commend itself to a wide circle of readers, not only as a vivid account of a primitive tribe, but as a study of acculturation processes applicable to India's primitive races in general. It is in similar intensive and sympathetic study, followed by sound reforms, that hope lies for the oppressed elsewhere.

J. P. MILLS.

# PREFACE

AS I WRITE these lines, I look over the wide Apa Tanang valley, land of primulas, rhododendrons and fruit blossoms, magnificiently set amidst dark, pine-covered ridges and topped by the snow peaks of the Himalayan main range. Under the light of the setting sun the dry bracken on the hill-slopes turns purple and the rice-fields, with their intricate pattern of low terraces, spread like a golden carpet over the valley bottom. The straw is still standing, but the grain has been garnered and fills the granaries crowding the outskirts of the villages. Ignorant of the plough, the Apa Tanangs yet reap rich harvests and grow ample food for the twenty thousand tribesmen concentrated in this single valley. Not a grain of their crops goes to merchant or money-lender, no land-revenue burdens the cultivator and no forest laws restrict hunting or the use of timber for firewood and building material. Rich in the products of their own country—those twenty odd square miles of which every acre is carefully husbanded—the rice and millet of their fields, the vegetables and fruits of gardens and groves, the decorative multi-coloured cloths woven and embroidered by their womenfolk, and the wares of their potters and blacksmiths, the Apa Tanangs look for wealth not to the outside world, but find satisfaction of their needs within the framework of their own tribal economy.

Anthropological work among populations animated and sustained by the vigorous spirit of a flourishing, self-contained culture is an exhilarating experience. For the cheerfulness and exuberance of men practically free from want is infectious, and in enjoying their hospitality and sharing their interests you enter a world untainted by many ills of more advanced societies.

How different is the lot of the anthropologist in Peninsular India! There the aboriginal populations are among the disinherited of fate and to identify oneself with their interests means a depressing struggle against oppression and exploitation, a heart-breaking sense of frustration in the face of the tribesmen's loss of land, economic freedom and self-respect.

Often while working in the Deccan I longed for the free air of the Naga Hills, but back in Assam, amidst tribes of the greatest anthropological interest, I yet feel that it is Middle India and the Deccan rather than these borderlands, where the solution of the crucial problems of Indian ethnology will ultimately be found. For there, in small tribes

of poor and drab culture, survive the last remnants of populations that formed a broad substratum of India's racial structure and influenced in no small way the cultural atmosphere of ancient times.

This book, however, is primarily a record of a primitive tribe's reaction to recent changes in its physical and cultural environment, and ethnological problems have been dealt with only fleetingly. The conditions under which it was written were indeed not conducive to studies in comparative ethnology. Many of its chapters were written in various camps in the Reddi country, others while we worked among the Gonds of Adilabad, and the final revision of the text was done in spare moments during a tour in the Balipara Frontier Tract.

My wife and I are deeply indebted to H.E.H. the Nizam's Government for the facilities and assistance given to us during our work among the Reddis and Koyas and for bearing the cost of publication of the present volume. For this support of anthropological research at a time when the public interest in focussed on subjects of more immediate practical value we have particularly to thank Colonel Sir Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan, Nawab of Chhatari, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., President of the Executive Council, Sir Theodore Tasker, C.I.E., O.B.E., I.C.S., who visited the Reddi country while we were working there and set in train the administrative measures for the tribesmen's benefit, his successor as Revenue Member, Mr. W. V. Grigson, I.C.S., as well as Mr. Ghulam Mohammed, C.I.E., Finance Member of H.E.H. the Nizam's Executive Council. They are all such dear personal friends that any formal acknowledgement seems singularly inadequate for the help, encouragement and hospitality they have showered on us whenever we stayed in Hyderabad; there is not one of them in whose house we did not either write or proof-read parts of this book.

Twice the unhealthiness of the Reddi country—one of the most malarious parts of the Deccan—threatened to bring our work to a standstill, and we have to thank it to Lady Tasker, who nursed my wife through a serious illness, and to Dr. Paul Little of the Singareni Collieries that on both occasions we were soon back among the Reddis. To Mr. and Mrs. W. V. Grigson, whose hospitable house has long had a reputation as a "sanatorium for anthropologists," we owe no less a debt of gratitude for all that they did to restore us in body and spirit, when, in January 1941, we returned to civilization disheartened by continuous malaria and the depressing social atmosphere of the Godavari valley.

Several times on our way to and from the Reddi country we enjoyed the overwhelming hospitality of the European community of the Singareni Collieries. It is impossible to thank individually all its members for their kindness, but Mrs. T. Rogers has further earned our gratitude by making all the line drawings contained in this volume.

The officers of the Samasthan of Paloncha have helped us to the best of their ability, but the greatest assistance in the field we received from the Swami of Parantapalli, that delightful personality whom to have met is a gain in itself. The story of his labours for the Reddis' welfare has a place in the pages of this book, but he must nevertheless remain anonymous, his name being known neither to us nor to his closest co-operators.

CHRISTOPH von FÜRER-HAIMENDORF

*Duta,*
*Balipara Frontier Tract,*
*Assam,*

*November,* 1944.

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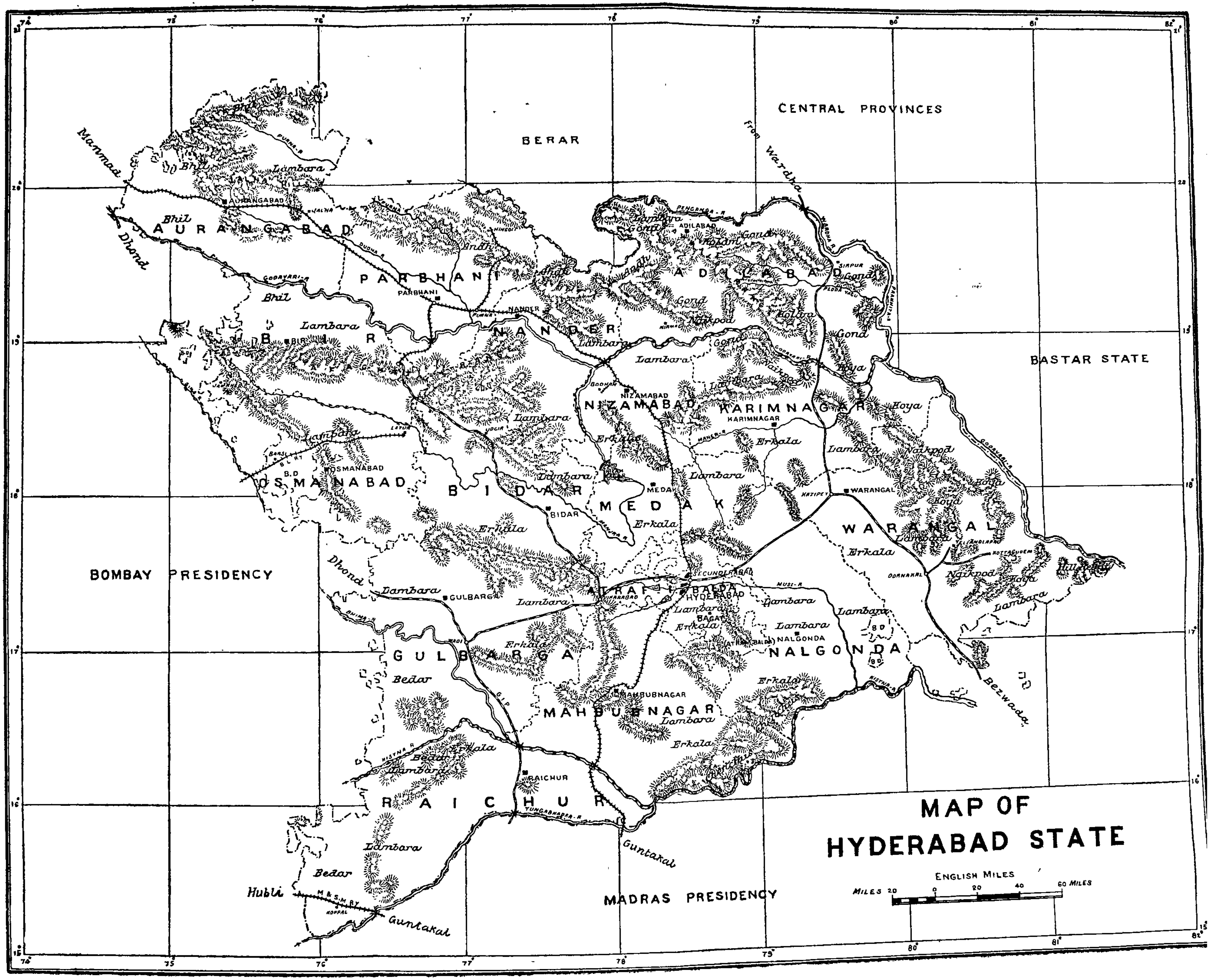
# INTRODUCTION


MAP OF
HYDERABAD STATE
ENGLISH MILES
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CENTRAL PROVINCES
BERAR
BASTAR STATE
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
MADRAS PRESIDENCY
AURANGABAD
PARBHANI
NANDER
ADILABAD
BIR
NIZAMABAD
KARIMNAGAR
OSMANABAD
BIDAR
MEDAK
WARANGAL
GULBARGA
NALGONDA
MAHBUBNAGAR
RAICHUR
HYDERABAD
SECUNDERABAD
Manmad
Dhond
Hubli
Guntakal
Bezwada
from Wardha
Bhil
Lambara
Gond
Kolam
Andh
Naikpod
Koya
Erkala
Bedar
Hill Reddi
GODAVARI R.
KISTNA R.
TUNGABHADRA R.
MUSI R.
PURNA R.
M. & S.M. RY.
G.I.P.

# INTRODUCTION

BESIDES the India of the great civilizations which followed each other for thousands of years in rarely broken sequence, the powerful empires linked by bonds of trade and culture with many a distant country, and the artists and philosophers whose works rank among the proud achievements of humanity, there has always been the India of the hills and forests where the passage of time seemed slowed and the autochthonous inhabitants of the country continued to live but little perturbed by the changing tides beyond their narrow horizon. Though hardly figuring in the records of Indian history, these aboriginals are by no means a negligible factor in the country's ethnic structure. Even today those who still retain their tribal organization number close on twenty-three millions, but if we consider that many of the aboriginals inhabiting the fringe of civilized areas have been assimilated by Hindu populations during recent centuries, we may assume that in ancient and mediæval times the so-called primitive tribes formed a relatively far greater part of India's total population.

This process of cultural assimilation, today precipitated by the rapid development of communications, must have been at work for several millennia, but its slowness and limitations constitute a phenomenon not easily explained by geographical conditions. The fact that the inhabitants of areas often less than a hundred miles distant from age-old centres of highly developed civilizations should still persist in the same simple life of food-gatherers and primitive cultivators that was general in epipalæolithic and neolithic times, is a circumstance almost unparalleled in human history. If it were not for the successful colonization of Further India and Indonesia as well as the wide distribution of Buddhist culture, we might be led to conclude that Indian civilizations lacked dynamic force. In early times the kingdoms of the Malabar coast sent expeditions to Burma and adventurous colonizers from the rich lands of the Carnatic and the Godavari and Kistna deltas embarked for the distant islands of the Malayan Archipelago, yet large stretches of the mother country remained outside the Hindu fold. These were *terra incognita* to all but a few and—the spirit of Herodotus being foreign to ancient Indian pandits—their barbaric inhabitants aroused little interest in the courts and the seats of learning. Even traders, so often the forerunners of higher civilization, failed to discover potentialities in the sparsely populated, roadless jungle tracts, where the difficulties and dangers of travelling far outweighed the chance of gain.

Though secluded from the recurrent waves of civilizations which swept through the open plains and valleys without tossing more than a spray into the jungle-clad hills, the autochthonous populations were not able to develop freely on their own lines. Once the natural veins of traffic had fallen into the hands of organized states, vastly superior to the aboriginals in material means, tribal groups became isolated and the narrowing of their habitat led in many cases to a stagnation and impoverishment of their cultural life. Just as in Europe and America linguistic and racial minorities such as the Volga Germans or the French Canadians[1] still persist in the same customs and manners of speech that, now long obsolete in their parent nation, prevailed before their isolation, so many of the aboriginal tribes seem to have been arrested in the stage of development reached at the time of their seclusion. The proximity to progressive populations surrounding those enclaves of primitive culture seldom compensated for the lack of contacts with tribes on a similar cultural level; for the attitude of superiority among Hindus and Muslims towards the primitive dwellers of the forest hampered social intercourse, and in the material field the influence of advanced civilizations stunted rather than enriched aboriginal culture. There is a striking contrast between the present poverty in arts and crafts of most aboriginals in Peninsular India and the wealth of artistic expression among primitive races in Indonesia, the South Seas and the hill-tracts of Assam and Burma: there every weapon, implement and article of dress is an indigenous creation and in harmony with the spirit of the local culture, but in India products of tribal craftsmen have long been replaced by bartered trade-goods and among the possessions of the average aboriginal of today next to nothing bears the imprint of his own æsthetic sense. Exceptions are found in such large blocks of aboriginal culture as Bastar or Orissa, where the genius of the tribesmen has had scope for undisturbed development.

In the first volume of this series I have described the Chenchus[2], a tribe of primitive hunters and food-collectors belonging to the oldest surviving racial and cultural stratum in India. But the jungle tribes now found scattered over Southern India in small groups can never have been very numerous and it was only the first efforts at food-production in the form of agriculture that paved the way to a settled life and resulted in a gradual increase of the population.

The traditional systems of agriculture of most aboriginal tribes, from the highly specialized rice-cultivation on irrigated terraces of the Angami Nagas to the rough shifting cultivation of the Panyer in the

1. Cf. J. Huxley, A. C. Haddon and A. M. Carr Saunders, *We Europeans*. London 1939, p. 214: "Anyone who travels among them discovers that he is in France of the eighteenth century. They have retained and jealously guard the language, religion and way of life, and outlook of their ancestors who left France two hundred years or so ago. They are far less touched by Americanization than most countries of Europe."

2. *The Chenchus, Jungle Folk of the Deccan*, London 1943.

Western Ghats, have one feature in common: they are entirely dependent on human labour, unaided by the use of domestic animals. It is this feature which justifies their classification as systems of neolithic type in contrast to the plough-cultivation of later ages. Yet, in spite of this common element there is, not merely in secondary characteristics but also in degree of development, a wide disparity in the forms of agriculture practised by the various tribal populations and it would be erroneous to regard as one and the same all agricultural systems falling under the heading 'shifting cultivation.' From the economic, though perhaps not the technological view-point, the chasm between the elaborate and extremely productive shifting cultivation of the Nagas and other hill-tribes of Assam and Burma and the Hill Reddis' crude methods of raising small quantities of grain with the help of no other implement than the digging-stick, is as deep as between ploughing and the Nagas' hoe-cultivation; and if the latter is rightly considered a very ancient form of agriculture, a far greater age must be attributed to the digging-stick cultivation of such backward tribes as the Hill Reddis.

A description of a people in this stage of cultural development seems therefore an appropriate sequence to the monograph on the Chenchus, whose economic and social make-up is still essentially that of primitive food-gatherers. It is rather due to chance, however, than to a preconceived plan that the two first volumes of this series deal with two tribes representing consecutive stages of cultural development: before I set foot in the country of the Reddis, I knew nothing of their existence.

When, after finishing my work among the Chenchus, I had to decide which of the aboriginal tribes of Hyderabad to make the next object of my studies, my choice fell on the Koyas of the Warangal District. Looking at the map I was particularly attracted by the most eastward corner of the district, a triangular mountain-tract sandwiched between the Godavari and the boundary of the Madras Presidency and apparently devoid of communications other than footpaths. If anywhere in Hyderabad, it was here that one could hope to find Koyas comparatively untouched by the influence of progressive populations, and though I meant to study the results of just this influence on Koya culture, I wanted first to gain experience of Koyas in their old setting.

Few people in Hyderabad had visited the remote corner of the Dominions on the lower Godavari and from the information I was able to gather, it appeared that the hills marked on the map as Bison Hills were inhabited by Koyas who used, like the Bison-horn Marias of Bastar, dance head-dresses adorned with the horns of wild bison. True, G. E. C. Wakefield mentioned in an article on his visit to the Godavari gorge a race of hillmen called Reddis, who lived in widely dispersed

hamlets and used to hunt the bison with bow and arrow[1]; but no aboriginal tribe described as 'Reddis' was listed in the Hyderabad Census Report of 1931, and this led me to believe that Wakefield had been under a misapprehension and that the group to which he referred as 'Reddis' must have been a branch of the Koya tribe.

At the end of October 1940, my wife and I travelled from Borgampad by boat down the Godavari as far as Parantapalli, the last village within the boundaries of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, picturesquely situated on the right bank of the great gorge. Here it was not long before we learnt from the local aboriginals that they were not Koyas; they called themselves Reddis and disclaimed all connection with the Koyas living in villages some fifteen miles away, whom they seemed to consider people of lower caste. While the Koyas in these parts speak a dialect of Gondi, the Reddis have no other language than Telugu, and there is no doubt that they constitute a separate tribe. The fact that they were practically unknown, while a certain amount of information on Koyas is given in the writings of the Rev. J. Cain and W. V. Grigson, determined us to postpone the study of Koyas and to devote ourselves entirely to work among the Reddis.

During the following weeks we camped at Parantapalli, from where we visited some of the small settlements high up in secluded valleys of the Bison Hills, as well as several villages on the banks of the Godavari. At first the attitude of the Reddis of Parantapalli was in no way different from that which we have become accustomed to encounter on arriving in an aboriginal village without 'credentials' from friendly tribesmen in the vicinity. They were rather shy and apparently at a loss to understand the purpose of our coming, but at the same time they were definitely friendly and quite prepared to sit down and chat over a leaf-pipe. Within a few days, however, this attitude underwent an alarming change. None of the villagers came near our camp, and we had the greatest difficulty in getting even such essentials as water and firewood. On crossing a threshold we were met with sullen looks and silence, our gifts of tobacco and salt elicited hardly a word or a smile, and the moment we tried to enter into a conversation, one and all declared that they were tremendously busy and had to leave the village on some urgent business. Never in all our anthropological peregrinations had we experienced such unfriendliness, and it was some time before we began to realize that the Reddis' extraordinary behaviour was not a spontaneous reaction, but was instigated by outsiders. The subsequent chapters will show how during the last two generations the Reddis of the villages on the Godavari bank turned from cultivation to forest labour and have been employed by forest contractors for the felling of

1. *Note on a visit to the prehistoric burial-grounds of Janampet in the Paloncha Taluqs of the Warangal District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions.* Appendix C of the Annual Report of the Archaeological Department, Hyderabad, 1328 F. (1918-1919 A.D.).

bamboo and timber. These contractors had succeeded in gaining so complete a control over the Reddis that even the transference of whole village communities from one contractor to the other was no unusual event.[1] They paid no cash wages but supplied the Reddis with negligible amounts of millet, salt and tobacco, whose value constituted a daily wage of hardly more than one anna. Naturally they resented the presence of outsiders in the area which they considered their exclusive domain; and fearing, not unjustly, that any investigation into the prevailing economic conditions might expose their unscrupulous methods and endanger the enormous profits they derived from the exploitation of the aboriginals, they threw their whole weight into the task of antagonising the Reddis to our work. One of the stories they spread was that I had come to recruit the men for the war and remove them forcibly from their homes, but when such rumours did not have the desired effect and the Reddis began to trust us, they resorted to threats; they let it be known that anyone seen talking to us would pay heavily for his audacity once we had left the district. All this took place behind the scenes, and it was only rarely that we met either the merchants, most of whom resided in the East Godavari District, or their agents living in the villages on the right bank. Yet their intimidating tactics proved only too successful, and our work in Parantapalli during these first weeks was seriously hampered. The only redeeming factor was the presence of a *sadhu* who, having lived for many years in his near-by *ashram*, had gained an intimate knowledge of the Reddis. He did his best to counteract the rumours spread by the contractors, and his knowledge of local conditions greatly helped us to understand the situation.

When at the end of November we moved from Parantapalli to the neighbouring village of Kakishnur, we experienced again a considerable initial friendliness and then, coinciding with the arrival of an agent of the principal timber merchant, a sudden change to reticence and evasiveness.

There is no need to emphasize that such conditions were not conducive to fruitful anthropological work. Many of the Reddis understood our friendly disposition and in private poured forth complaints against the oppressiveness of their 'owners,' yet they hesitated to expose themselves by too close an association with us and our camp.

After three weeks in Kakishnur we moved to Koinda, a village with a mixed population of Reddis and Koyas, and thence to Katkur. There the local forest contractor sabotaged our investigations by sending all the able-bodied Reddis to a far-away camp in the jungle on the morning after our arrival, thus preventing any kind of contact. There was nothing to be done but to employ our stay in Katkur in making excursions to several of the Reddi settlements in the vicinity. Ultimately we had

1. Cf. p. 297.

to move on with no more than the glimpse of the Reddis of Katkur which we had gained on the first evening.

Far from satisfied with the results of this first tour, we left the Godavari valley at the end of December. But in February 1941 we returned to Parantapalli and travelled by boat down the Godavari and through the gorges as far as Polavaram, from where we went by car to Ashwaraopet, a village some forty miles west of the Godavari. A severe attack of the malignant type of malaria so prevalent in the Reddi country prevented my wife from continuing the tour and she returned to Hyderabad. But I travelled eastwards to Anantavaram, a plains village with a considerable population of Reddis, who live as agricultural labourers side by side with Koyas and Lambaras. Anantavaram lies on the edge of a large hilly forest area extending between the Godavari and the Madras boundary, and it was in this area that I intended to spend the following weeks. In Gogulapudi, a small Reddi village some 1,000 feet above sea-level, I found conditions infinitely more pleasant than those prevailing in the villages on the Godavari. The Reddis of the hills do not fall within the sphere of influence of the timber merchants; they were natural and cheerful, and I found it easy to make friends. It was the time of festivals and visiting, and I met a number of Reddis from other hill settlements; even men from villages on the river-bank who had come to Gogulapudi to enjoy the palm-wine and take part in the great Mango Festival were infected with the general geniality and shed the reticence they had observed while under the eyes of their employers.

Unfortunately my tour throughout the hills came to an abrupt end, for a serious turn in my wife's illness compelled me to join her in Hyderabad.

When we could resume our work at the end of March, we did not return directly to the Reddi country: we felt that, in order to understand the Reddis' economic and cultural position among the tribes of the Eastern Ghats, it was necessary to visit their neighbours to the north, about whom the existing literature affords little reliable information. We travelled northwards from Kunavaram on the Godavari through Konta in Bastar State to Malkanagiri in the Koraput District of Orissa, and spent April and the larger part of May among the Gadabas, Bondos, and Dires (Didayi) in the hills north-west of the Machkund River.[1]

The Dires border almost immediately on the most northern groups of Reddis that inhabit the hills along the Sileru River in the Malkanagiri Taluq, and the mountain massif of the Ellavaram Taluq in the East Godavari District. Though the Reddis speak Telugu, and the Dires, like the Gadabas and Bondos, an Austroasiatic language, there is a definite cultural and to a lesser extent racial similarity between the two tribes. At the end of May we re-entered the Reddi country by crossing the Sileru River below Kondakamberu, and in the mountain-tract

1. The Machkund is the upper course of the river known in the Reddi country as Sileru.

round Dharakonda in the Gudem Taluq of Vizagapatam District we found hillmen who called themselves Konda Bagtalas, but were evidently identical with the Reddis of the neighbouring East Godavari District, with whom they interdine and intermarry.

Early in June we reached Patakota in Ellavaram, which is the seat of one of the most prominent Reddi *muttadar*, and touring through the Northern Hills, as this area will be described throughout the book, we visited several of the remotest Reddi settlements, tucked away in high valleys, sometimes well over 3,000 feet above sea-level. From there we made our way through several hill-*mutta* to Boduluru, where we crossed the Pamuleru River on our way to Chodavaram.

After a short stay in Rampa-Chodavaram and Devipatnam we travelled in a sailing boat up the Godavari, camping in several river-bank villages such as Kachulur, Teliberu, Kondamodalu, Shivagiri, Telladibala and Balamamidi, and revisited Parantapalli on our way to Jidduguppa opposite Katkur. From there we visited several villages on the left Godavari bank, and then moved up to Gogulapudi which we had chosen for our rain-camp. Here the Reddis had built us a small palm-thatched house with wattle-walls and during the following three months we lived very much in Reddi style subsisting mainly on local produce: a variety of wild leaves and herbs, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, a few wild fruits, certain vegetables grown on the Reddis' fields, young maize and the small millets which they began to reap in August. This time allowed us an insight into the functioning of a small compact Reddi community, and it was easy to establish fairly intimate contact with the inhabitants of the nine houses of Gogulapudi and their relations and friends in the neighbouring villages. In those months many Reddis and Koyas from the lowlands came up to Gogulapudi to seek our help in their struggle against the oppressiveness of forest contractors, merchants and minor officials, and to complain about the forest laws lately imposed by the Administration and the alienation of their land by outsiders.

We left Gogulapudi in the middle of October, passed once more through Anantavaram and concluded our work with a visit to an isolated group of Reddis in the villages of Tirmalkunta, Reddigudem, and Pusukunta, half-way between Anantavaram and Paloncha; there we arrived at the end of October, almost exactly one year after we had first set out for the Reddi country.

Two years later, in October and November 1943, we paid once more a short visit to the Reddis of the Godavari Region. By that time the manuscript of this book was completed, but before sending it to press we wanted to view the development of the Reddis' economic and social condition following the measures taken by the Administration in pursuance of recommendations which I had made in 1940. The changes brought about directly and indirectly through this reorient-

ation of policy vis-à-vis the aboriginals have been considerable, and Chapter XV has largely been rewritten in the light of the experiences during our visit in 1943.

The greater part of the material for the present monograph was collected among the Hill Reddis within the boundaries of Hyderabad and their social and economic position is the main theme of the book. But to gain a picture of the tribe as a whole and to demonstrate the results of variegated culture-contacts as well as the different systems of administration under which the Reddis live, it has been necessary to review conditions among the Reddis in British India, and particularly those in the Rampa country and the Northern Hills, who are ruled by hereditory *muttadar* or feudal chiefs.

A word must be said as to the scope of the term 'Reddi.' The Konda (or Hill) Reddis described in this book are by no means the only population known as 'Reddis.' For Reddi is also the name of a section of Kapus, cultivators and land-owners of the Telugu country, who hold a high position in Hindu society, and from whose martial branch the Reddi Kings of Rajahmundry are said to have sprung. E. Thurston quotes a statement of F. R. Hemingway in his short article on the Konda Reddis[1] according to which "they call themselves by various high-sounding titles, such as Pandava Reddis, Raja Reddis, and Reddis of the solar race (Suryavamsa), and do not like the plain name of Konda Reddis." This statement seems to be based on a misconception, for Pandava Reddis are a caste of traders, who penetrated up the Godavari valley from the vicinity of Rajahmundry and it is only certain *muttadar* in the Northern Hills who style themselves Raja Reddis. Within the Hindu caste of Reddis there are numerous sub-sections such as Panta Reddis, Kil Reddis, Bhumanchi Reddis, Motad Reddis and Paknat Reddis, but none of these stands in any close contact with the Konda Reddis, who form a strictly endogamous group and a distinct cultural unit. A tentative explanation for the description of so many different populations by the name Reddi will be suggested in Chapter IX (p. 161), but here it may suffice to say that this monograph is concerned solely with the aboriginal hill-tribe known as Konda Reddis.

The problems of acculturation and of the impact of progressive populations on peoples in primitive stages of development have been intensively studied in Africa, America and Australia and form today the subject of a vast literature. But though their importance for the welfare of aboriginal populations has also been recognized in India, few exhaustive accounts of the actual process of acculturation in any particular tribe or area are available. Most generalizations on the position of aboriginal tribes vis-à-vis their more advanced neighbours suffer from a lack of concrete examples, and there seems to be a tendency

1. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. III. p. 354.

to assume that the transition to more developed forms of culture follows more or less the same lines in all parts of India. Such an assumption is entirely unjustified. The exponents of higher civilizations consist of such different elements as Government officials, Hindu cultivators, traders, forest contractors, indigenous reformers of various creeds and foreign missionaries and the results of their influence on the autochthonous tribal cultures depend not only on the nature of the forces that impress themselves on the aboriginals, but also on the sequence in which the various contacts are established. Much intensive anthropological field work is therefore required before a general survey of the present position of the aboriginal races and cultures in India can be undertaken with any chance of success, and indeed it seems doubtful whether individual research can ever bring about a satisfactory solution of the many problems of acculturation so essential for the fate of India's twenty-three million aboriginals. The study of the same problems in regard to the infinitely smaller indigenous population of Australia and its Mandated Territories has required the concerted efforts of a group of highly trained scholars, powerfully supported by the Australian National Research Council, and in Africa research in culture-contacts only began to bear fruit after long-term schemes had been initiated by the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures and the Rockefeller Foundation, and a number of experts had been appointed as Government anthropologists.

Urgent and important as may be the study of the clash of cultures in India, it is difficult for anthropologists to give these problems their whole attention as long as so little reliable information is on record for most of the aboriginal tribes: India is today the 'dark continent' for comparative historical ethnology.

In the present monograph, which combines a descriptive account of an individual tribe with an analysis of recent culture-contacts and their reactions on the aboriginals, we have tried to fill a blank on the ethnographic map and to provide at the same time material for a future comprehensive study of acculturation processes in India, a study which must form the basis of any policy for the administration and protection of the country's primitive races.

## Part I.

# THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

## CHAPTER I

# ENVIRONMENT

THE present habitat of the Reddis is the section of the Eastern Ghats which, lying approximately between 17° 15′ and 18° 00′ northern latitude and 81° 10′ and 82° 00′ eastern longitude, stretches from the confluence of the Machkund and Goperu Rivers southwards across the great Godavari gorges to the fringe of the deltaic plain between the Godavari and Kistna Rivers. Politically this tract is divided between H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions and the East Godavari Agency of the Madras Presidency; thus the Reddis share with many of India's aboriginal tribes the fate of falling under several different administrations.

The Reddis are essentially a hill-people and their home is the high valleys of the main ranges, the slopes and spurs of foot-hills, and the narrow gorges of the Godavari, while Koyas and Telugus occupy the surrounding plains and are gradually filtering into the broader valleys where land is suitable for plough-cultivation.

The Eastern Ghats run in several chains of densely wooded hills approximately from north-east to south-west. South of the Godavari the main range, which is known as the Papi Konda Range, reaches heights of nearly 2,500 feet, but in the north, where the mountains are on an average higher, peaks such as Katramraj Konda and Pedda Konda exceed 4,000 feet.

The Godavari, the most important river of the Reddi country, cuts almost at right angles through the Eastern Ghats and forms here the boundary between Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State. Where it winds through the foot-hills, the river is broad and shallow and its wide and sandy bed is flanked by pockets of alluvial cultivable land; but where it encounters the main massif the stream narrows and forces its way through a deep, rocky gorge. From the south no major tributaries drain into the Godavari, but from the north flow two important rivers, the Sileru, which rises in Orissa and enters the Sabari opposite Konta twenty miles before it reaches the Godavari, and the Pamuleru, which, with its source in the Gudem hills, winds through the wide Gurtedu-Boduluru valley and enters the Godavari at Kolluru, in a bend of the gorge.

But most of the Reddi country is watered by mountain streams and rivulets that flow off the slopes into the valleys separating the ranges.

In some areas, such as the hills to the north, these streams are numerous and perennial, and here even the highest valleys are inhabitable, but in the hills flanking the Godavari water is scarce and large tracts are very sparsely peopled.

### *Divisions*

We have stated already that the main body of the Reddi Tribe falls within the administrative units of Hyderabad State and the East Godavari Agency, the latter being subdivided into the Taluqs of Bhadrachalam, Chodavaram, Ellavaram and Polavaram, but on the border of the Agency the Reddis overflow into the Vizagapatam District and the Malkanagiri Taluq of Orissa. For our purposes political and administrative boundaries are, however, of only secondary importance, and it will therefore be convenient to divide the Reddi country into three regions which suggest themselves by their geographical and cultural homogeneity. Such a division will help us in the exposition of our material and will render our description of the various types of Reddi culture more plastic.

The most outstanding physical feature of the southern part of the Reddi country is the Godavari, and this river exercises a profound influence on those living on its banks and in the hills on both sides of the riverain tract. It will therefore be convenient to speak of a GODAVARI REGION, which embraces the villages on the river-bank as well as those in the immediate hinterland to the north and those in the whole of the hilly country south of the Godavari; therein are included all the Reddis of Hyderabad and of Polavaram Taluq, and part of those of the Bhadrachalam and Chodavaram Taluqs.

In the following chapters we shall refer repeatedly to many villages of this region, and a short enumeration[1] of the most important Reddi settlements will therefore be useful. Fifteen miles downstream from Kunavaram at the confluence of the Godavari and Sabari Rivers we reach Katkur, the first Reddi village on the right bank, and now inhabited by Reddis and a few families of Malas; opposite Katkur lies Kaltanuru and Jidduguppa and at some distance Kotarugommu. From here on the dark wooded hills are chequered with the bright green or yellow of *podu*-fields and patches of young secondary jungle growing on slopes that have been recently cultivated. But level plough-land is confined to a few pockets of alluvial soil at the mouth of side-valleys. Returning to the Hyderabad bank and passing Tekur and Kasaram, we come to Koinda, a large village with a mixed Reddi and Koya population, and three miles further downstream to Tekpalli, opposite which lies Pochavaram. Here the hills begin to close in and Kakishnur, the next

1. The spelling of place-names follows in general that of the Survey of India maps, though obvious mistakes have been corrected where important Reddi villages are concerned.

village, and Tumileru on the opposite bank are already within the gorge zone. When we reach Parantapalli and Kondepudi the river has narrowed and deepened and on days when no wind ruffles the surface of the water it lies as still and as quiet between towering cliffs as any Alpine lake or Norwegian fjord. Parantapalli, since the abandonment of Jidugumma the last village within the boundary of Hyderabad State, is situated in the most eastern corner of the Dominions. Two miles further downstream at the mouth of the Pamuleru, where we find the village of Kolluru, the Godavari turns south-east and for the next three miles flows through the narrowest part of the gorge. Here three small settlements, Balamamedi, Telladibala and Srivaka, cling precariously to the rocky slopes, but when the valley widens we find first the large village of Kondamodalu, where good cultivable land has attracted *many* Telugu settlers, and then several Reddi villages at intervals on either bank, until after twelve miles the hills recede and we arrive at Devipatnam and Polavaram.

The hills north of the Godavari between Kunavaram and the gorge, known as the Rekapalli Hills, are hardly inhabited and the only villages of note are Pedda Konda and Somanamallu, but in the hills to the south there lives a considerable number of Reddis on both sides of the Papi Konda Range. Within H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions we find foot-hill settlements like Erametta and Chintamreddipadu and in the highlands villages like Gogulapudi, Modela, Pantapalli and Kutravada; in the Polavaram Taluq lie Mautagudem, Chintapalli, Munjaluru, and Daravada, to name only those which are referred to in later chapters.

The second easily definable region is the mountain-tract bounded to the north-west by the plain of Malkanagiri and to the east and south-east by the Gudem Hills and the upper course of the Pamuleru River; a line drawn from Kutravada village on the Pamuleru westwards to Lakkavaram in the Bhadrachalam Taluq may be taken as its southern border. In these NORTHERN HILLS, as we will call this area throughout the book, the Reddis live in numerous scattered and frequently shifted settlements, often consisting of only one or two houses. It is here that the mountain-peaks reach heights of over 4,000 feet and perennial streams and rivulets flow through every valley. Viewed from one of these peaks the country appears as an immense mass of wooded hills with ridge upon ridge stretching westwards beyond the Sileru and eastwards till they merge into the hills of the Vizagapatam District; here and there a grass-covered or rocky hill-top rises above the tree-line, but the dense forests that clothe slopes and valleys seem hardly touched by human hand, the widely scattered hill-fields appearing as insignificant patches among the abundant growth. The other aspect of this Northern Hills' Region is the wide, level Gurtedu-Patakota valley, where the forest has been cleared to accommodate plough-cultivation, and the few

enclaves of land under permanent cultivation in places such as Bodlanka and Pullangi.

Villages of considerable size and permanence are few in this region and it will suffice to mention Bodulur, Satavada and Pullangi in the south, Bodlanka and Kanivada further north, and Gurtedu and Patakota in the north-east.

The third region comprises the lower hills and the broad valleys, which extend south-east of the Pamuleru River and south of the Gudem Hills, and fall gradually away into the Godavari valley below the gorges. On the fringe of these hills lies Rampa-Chodavaram, the old seat of the Rampa Zamindar, and we will therefore describe this region as the RAMPA COUNTRY, although it does not comprise the whole of the former Rampa Agency. In the Rampa Country the Reddis are no longer the predominant population, for the potentialities for permanent cultivation afforded by the wide fertile valleys have attracted large numbers of Koyas and Telugu cultivators, and these exert a considerable influence on the local Reddis. Chodavaram is the headquarters of the tahsil and the motor-roads connecting it with Rajahmundry and Devipatnam greatly facilitate the influx of lowlanders. Apart from Chodavaram there are numerous large villages with mixed populations such as Pedda Geddada, Maredumilli, Gujjumamidivalasa and Bhimavaram; the most northerly village is Kutravada on the Pamuleru River.

Outside these three regions there are several small groups of Reddis, isolated from the main body of the tribe by intervening plains population. Thus we find two Reddi villages, Reddigudem and Pusukunta, in the block of hills some 18 miles south-west of Rudramkot, and four or five villages in the hill range near the boundary between Bhadrachalam Taluq and Bastar State, south-west of Konta.

## *Physical Features.*

The basic geological formation of the Reddi country consists of Archæan gneisses and schists, while the lower Gondwana rock, found on both sides of the Godavari above the ghats, is mainly restricted to the lowlands. Fluvial alluvium lines the river for long stretches and within the gorge zone fills the small pockets that are created by mountain streams flowing into the Godavari. Red ferruginous soil predominates, but there are also patches of heavy black soil. Graphite is found in small quantities both in Hyderabad and in the Chodavaram and Polavaram Taluqs.

The climate differs considerably from that of the more central parts of the Deccan, for the country, besides lying close to the sea, is subject to both the south-west and the south-east monsoon. The hot season lasts from the beginning of March to the middle of June, when the tempera-

ture in the Godavari valley rises to 116° Fahrenheit (45.6°C.). While there is hardly any rain in March, between 3 and 4 inches fall in April and May, and about 35 to 40 inches during the south-west monsoon, which lasts from June to September. The average for the months of October to December is almost 9 inches and though the greater part of this falls in October and the first half of November, I have experienced very considerable rain as late as the first weeks of December. The driest time of the year is from January to March, when there is seldom more than 1½ inches of rain. Though the breaking of the monsoon ends the great heat of April and May, the climate in the valleys remains hot and oppressive even during the rains. In the Godavari valley November may still be hot and damp, with low lying, grey clouds and neither relieving wind nor morning-dew; here the cold weather with chilly nights lasts only from December to the end of January, and even then the heat at midday may be considerable. In the uplands the climate is more invigorating and the cold weather lasts longer, while in the Northern Hills fresh breezes alleviate even the hottest months.

Among the inhabitants of the adjoining plains the Godavari Region and the Rampa Country have the reputation of extreme unhealthiness, and this is mainly due to the frequent occurrence of a malignant and dangerous type of malaria. Well-meaning local officials tried to dissuade us from camping for any length of time in Parantapalli or any other village in the Godavari gorges, and our original scepticism evaporated when both of us, as well as our servants, were repeatedly down with fever. This experience is corroborated by the description of the Agency tracts in the *Gazetteer of the Godavari District* "...........from the earliest times up to the present day the country has retained a most unenviable reputation for its unhealthiness. The Board of Revenue referred to its 'putrid fever' as far back as 1794; and of the party of 25 men who were recently engaged in inspecting the forests of Rekapalli......almost all suffered from low fever of a malignant and lingering type, several were dangerously ill, and as many as one-fourth died,"[1] A similar reference to the ravages of malaria is found in the chapter dealing with the Rampa rebellion: "The most deadly foe of the police and troops engaged in suppressing the outbreak had been the malaria, which infests this part of the country. At the end of March 1880, out of 2,400 men employed, no less than 590 were on the sick list. Many deaths occurred, and in many other cases those attacked were months before they completely recovered."[2] Hardly less discouraging are the experiences of Sir James Thomson, a former Collector of the East Godavari District, who voices his opinion of the country in the following words: "It seems to me to be a reckless throwing away of health to

1. *Gazetteer of the Godavari District*, by F. R. Hemingway, Madras, 1915, Vol. I, p. 148.

2. *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

take a large party there or to make any lengthy stay."[1]

The unhealthy character of the country is probably one of the causes for its backwardness and though malaria no longer represents the danger which it did fifty years ago, the Reddi country is still avoided by most outsiders.

*Flora and Fauna.*

The flora of the Reddi country resembles in some respects that of the Nallamalai Hills which I described at some length in the first volume of this series.[2] Here it will therefore suffice to point out such features as are particularly characteristic of the Godavari valley and of the hills exceedings the Nallamalais in height.

In the Godavari Region, particularly on the lower hill-slopes lining the river, the forests are of a mixed deciduous type containing *Anogeissus latifolia,* which is in many places the predominant species, *Cleistanthus collinus, Lagerstroemia parviflora, Adina cordifolia,* and *Soymida febrifuga.* The higher slopes bear in addition *Terminalia chebula, Terminalia tomentosa, Chloroxylon Swietenia, Bassia latifolia, Gymnosporia montana,* and *Acacia leucophlea.* Good growth of *Tectona grandis* (teak) is found on the Papi Konda Range, and though teak does not occur naturally in the hills north of the Godavari, it has been successfully reared in the vicinity of the Pamuleru River and on the slopes flanking the Godavari. *Borassus flabellifer,* the palmyra palm, grows in large topes on the Godavari banks and in the lower valleys, while *Caryota urens,* a sago-like palm, prefers the hills and is usually to be found solitary or in small groups.

On the lower hill-slopes and in the valleys timber is largely interspersed with bamboos and these constitute in many parts the main value of the forest and are extensively exploited. The most common species in the Godavari Region is *Dendrocalamus strictus,* which thrives on hill slopes as well as on level ground, and appears to favour abandoned hill-fields where it grows gregariously. It is the species most in demand on the Rajahmundry market. *Bambusa arundinacea* lines many of the smaller streams and is also exported to some extent, while *Oxytenanthera monostigma,* a bamboo with long internodes is found on the higher slopes of the Papi Konda Range, but is little in demand.

The flora of the Northern Hills is of a very different character, and the forests of this mountainous tract are the grandest that I have seen in the Eastern Ghats anywhere between Jeypore and the Godavari. Great shady trees, rambling creepers, high growing grasses, a wealth of wild bananas, and spraying orchids and ferns clothe the upland valleys, and

1. *Statistical Appendix, together with a supplement to the District Gazetteer* (1907) *for Godavari District,* by K. N. Krishnaswami Ayyar, Madras, 1935.

2. *The Chenchus, Jungle Folk of the Deccan,* pp. 11-14.

FIG. 1. Great millet on the hills above the Godavari.

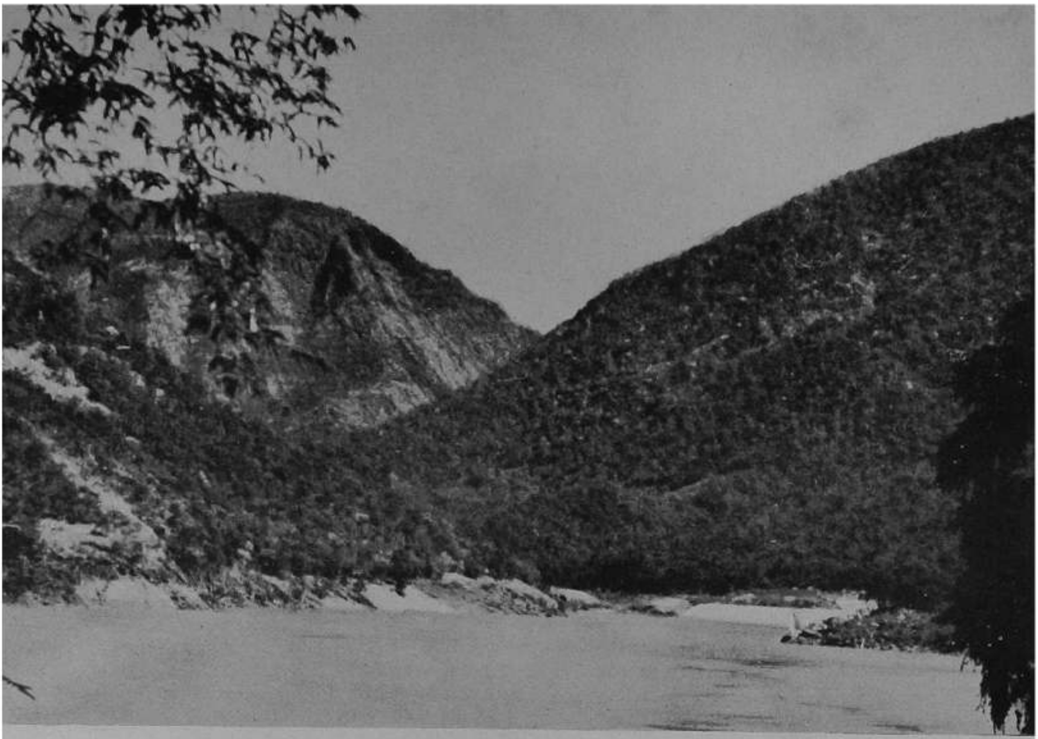
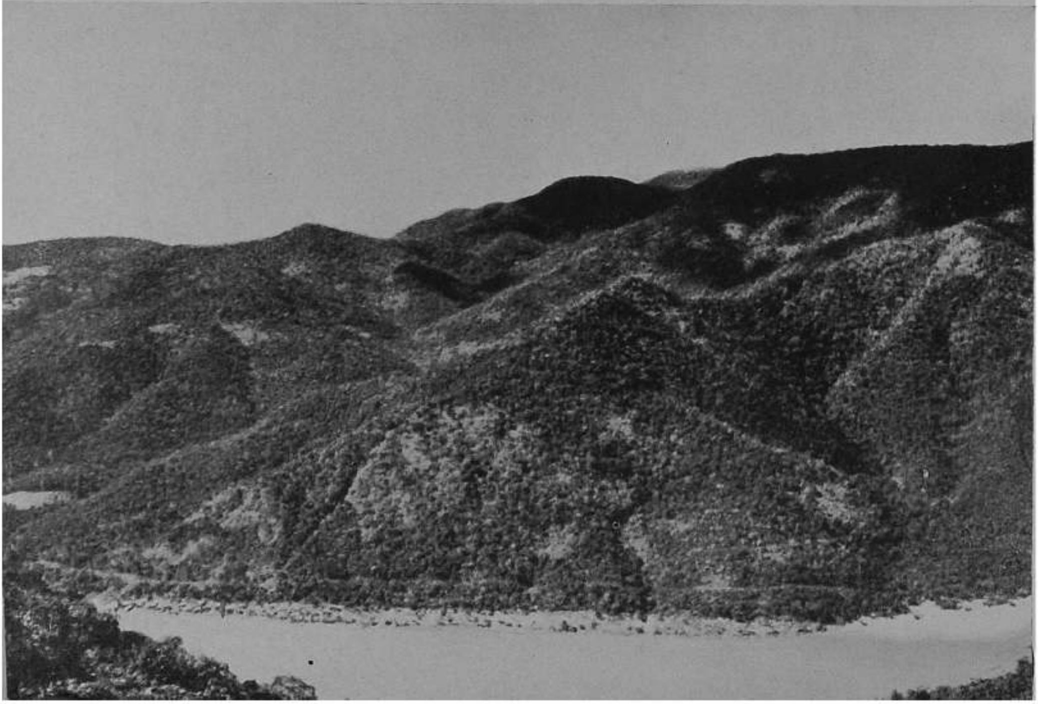


FIG. 2. The Godavari Gorge.

FIG. 3. The hills flanking the Godavari.



this luxuriant growth is probably due to the higher rainfall and the present impossibility of exploitation owing to transport difficulties. The most prominent tree of this area is *Xylia xylocarpa* and in association with this we find *Pterocarpus marsupium, Dalbergia latifolia, Schrebra sweetenoides, Schleichera trijuga, Ougenia dalbergioides* and *Dalbergia lanceolaria.* Here evergreen trees such as *Mangifera indica, Artocarpus integrifolia* and *Musa Sapientum* grow not only in the vicinity of water courses, but occur in great abundance on hill-slopes and even on ridges and spurs. It is only on heights of over 3,300 feet, that the trees recede and give way to low shrub, grass and dwarf date-palms (*Palmea acaulis*).

Further south, in the Godavari Region and particularly south of the Godavari, evergreen flora is restricted to such deep ravines with perennial streams as the valley leading from Parantapalli to Kutravada. There you find mango and jack-fruit trees as well as rattan and other palm species, and in the cold weather the shady hill-slopes are covered with the blue flowers of *Barleria strigosa.* Besides *Oldenlandia nudicaulis, Sauropus quadrangularis, Euphorbia elegans* and *Payllanthus suberosus,* plants otherwise rare in the Deccan, ferns such as *Luffa echinate* and *Melilotus parviflora* and orchids of various varieties are frequent both in these ravines and in the forests north of the Godavari.

Regarding the fauna of the country only a few words need be said in this context. The bison (*Gavaenus gaurus*), which gives its name to the mountains enclosing the Godavari gorge, occurs on both sides of the river and is protected in Hyderabad as well as in Madras. Tigers, panthers, bears, jackals and wild dogs are fairly numerous as well as sambar (*Rusa aristotelis*), spotted deer (*Axis maculatus*), nilgai, jungle sheep, black buck and wild pig. There is plenty of small game and monkeys are a continual menace to the crops. Water-birds of many descriptions, storks, cranes, pelicans, herons, egrets, gulls and kingfishers, are abundant in the Godavari valley, and the forests are the home of peafowl, jungle-fowl, hornbills and a host of smaller birds, many brightly coloured and many sweet singers. Mahseer, other fish both large and small, and prawns are to be caught in the Godavari, where in the dry season crocodiles bask on the sandbanks or plough through the quiet waters.

## *Communications*

Until recently the water-way of the Godavari was the only vein of traffic that traversed the Reddi country, and even today it is the most important means of transport. Sailing boats, punted in the face of unfavourable or failing wind, ply up and down the river at all times of the year carrying cargoes for Konta, Kunavaram and Bhadrachalam. Motor-launches have competed for some decades with these older

crafts, but at the height of the dry season they are not always able to reach even Kunavaram and are forced to dock at Ippuru. All the bamboo and timber cut in the hills flanking the river, as well as great quantities from Bastar and Chanda, are floated down to Rajahmundry tied into enormous rafts, and it is this easy and cheap mode of transport which renders the exploitation of forests in the Godavari Region extremely profitable. To the Reddis of the river-bank too the Godavari serves as an easy means of communication, and in their light dug-outs they paddle speedily from one village to another.

Roads on the other hand, are non-existent in the Godavari Region, except for one short metalled road on the left bank connecting Ippuru with Kunavaram, with a feeder stretching northwards to Chinturu. Even cart-tracks are scarce. On the Hyderabad side there is a very indifferent fair weather track from Rudramkot, a large village opposite Kunavaram, along the Godavari as far as Katkur and Koinda, but Tekpalli, Kakishnur and Parantapalli can, like all the villages in the hills, only be reached by foot-paths. There is no cart-track on the opposite side of the Godavari and in the gorge zone there are not even foot-paths along the banks. Very similar are the conditions in the hills of the Polavaram Taluq where touring can only be done on foot or on elephant.

The Rampa country has far better communications than any other part of the Reddi country. In the broad valleys cart-tracks are numerous and a motor-road with a daily bus-service links Chodavaram with Rajahmundry, Coconada and Devipatnam. From Chodavaram a road leads north-east through Pedda Geddada to within two miles of Maredumilli and there is a scheme to extend it to Kutravada on the Pamuleru River. From here on communications deteriorate. The Pamuleru which is as unnavigable as the Sileru, is often unfordable during the rains and the cart-track from Kutravada to Boduluru and Pullangi is so bad that it is seldom used by carts. Nobody north of the Pamuleru even owns a cart; pack-bullocks are the main means of transporting merchandise, while the luggage of touring officers is carried by Reddis. From Pullangi there are two foot-paths eastwards, one leading over a 3,500 feet pass to Sukmamedi near the Sileru and one further north over a higher pass into the Sileru valley and thence *via* Villarti into Malkanagiri.

There is also a bridle-path leading up the Pamuleru valley from Boduluru to Bodlanka and on over a steep pass to Gurtedu, Patakota and Dharakonda in Gudem Taluq; travelling northwards to Kondakamberu in Orissa you must follow this route, for there is no way over the mountains which here divide the two districts. The many scattered settlements of the Northern Hills are only connected by foot-paths, and though some of them can be negotiated by pack-bullocks it would be

difficult to travel by pony.

The scarcity of communications has no doubt retarded development in the Reddi country and is responsible for the backwardness of the people; but it is also one of the main factors that have led to the preservation of their tribal individuality and their traditional mode of life.

## CHAPTER II

# HISTORY

DARKNESS still veils the prehistory of the lower Godavari valley and the adjoining mountain-tracts, but there is good reason to believe that at least the flat lands were already populated in palæolithic times. The *coup-de-poing* culture known as Madrasien, which is well documented from the large open plains south of the Kistna River, extended most probably as far north as, and even across, the Godavari, and a crude hand-axe has indeed been found in Chodavaram.[1] The riveraine tracts above the ghats seem to have been inhabited by populations of similar cultural level; numerous palæoliths of greyish quartz have been found by W. T. Blanford near Ragundla (Regula) some fifteen miles west of Bhadrachalam, and about 20 miles north of that site we picked up a large discoid scraper of grey granite,[2] belonging unmistakably to a palæolithic *coup-de-poing* industry. Microlithic flake industries are found in the hills west of Janampet, but their chronological position is doubtful; it is as yet equally difficult to classify the scrapers and flakes, generally of reddish or tortoise-shell quartzite, that can be collected in great quantities in the gravel bed of the Godavari.

Though we were always on the look out for artefacts we discovered, except for one non-descript small scraper of white chert, no stone implements in the hills at present inhabited by the Reddis. This does not necessarily imply that in the stone age this tract was unpopulated. The lack of surface finds is easily explained by the nature of the country: the alluvial, flat land bordering the Godavari is periodically submerged and new soil is deposited as the river subsides, while the hills are so densely covered by vegetation that artefacts are not likely to be found without a systematic search.

Whereas no traces of neolithic culture have as yet been forthcoming from the immediate vicinity of the Reddi country, a polished basalt axe-head of flat, oblong shape, the cutting-edge only slightly longer than the blunt side, has been found near Yellandu sixty miles to the north-west, and I am in possession of a larger axe-head from Mahbubabad some twenty miles due west of Yellandu. The latter is of a

1. L. A. Cammiade and M. C. Burkitt, *Fresh Light on the Stone Ages in Southeast India*, Antiquity, Vol. IV, 1930, p. 332, Fig. 2. I presume that the Chodavaram mentioned in this article on palæolithic finds from the Eastern Ghats is Rampa-Chodavaram in the East Godavari Agency.

2. Now in the Hyderabad Museum.

type common in Hyderabad; it is seven inches long tapering from the broad, curved edge to a narrow neck, and of oval cross-section. The upper end is not polished and there can be little doubt that it belongs to the category of protoneolithic axes with oval section and pointed butt, the *Walzenbeile* of Menghin's and Heine-Geldern's terminology. It is impossible to say what stone implements the Reddis used before they had a chance of bartering iron; but if we consider their general level of culture and all that we know of protoneolithic civilizations, it seems not improbable that the protoneolithic axes so widely distributed over the Deccan are the work of races belonging to the same ethnological stratum as the Reddis. Unlike the forefathers of the Chenchus, in whose economy there was no need for any heavy cutting instrument, *podu*-cultivators must undoubtedly have needed stone-axes of a fairly heavy and well finished kind for felling trees and clearing the hill-slopes. No type of stone-axe as yet found in the Deccan is more suitable for this work than the large axe-heads with polished edge of which the axe from Mahbubabad is a good specimen.

Owing to the paucity of finds any correlation of stone-age industries with the surviving primitive cultures of such tribes as the Reddis remains, of course, conjectural and the first definite landmark in the history of the lower Godavari valley are the megalithic monuments of the early iron age. The existence of stone circles and dolmens on the low hill ranges to both sides of the Godavari in the vicinity of Mangapet and Janampet, *i.e.*, some 60 miles upstream from the Reddi country, has been known for some decades, but the first systematic attempt to establish their contents was undertaken by the Hyderabad Archæological Department in January 1941. During these excavations, part of which I was privileged to watch, several dolmen graves were opened and found to contain, among other things, iron implements of various types. The hundreds, if not thousands, of megalithic burials, which are scattered over the jungle-clad hills of that area almost certainly indicate that during the early iron age a population of considerable strength and of an advanced social organization must have inhabited the Godavari valley. Only the concerted effort of many hundred men could raise into position cap-stones, some as large as 12 by 8 feet and 2 feet thick, while settlements of dolmen builders must have existed over long periods for whole hill-sides to be covered with the graves of their prominent men.

The most impressive array of dolmens discovered in eastern Hyderabad are undoubtedly those of Janampet, but I found a hitherto unknown group of more modest grave-circles near the village of Rudramkot, less than twelve miles from the nearest Reddi settlement. Thus a population with a material culture far more developed than that of the Reddis must, even at so distant a period as the early iron age, have

dwelt close to their present habitat.

A wide unbridged gulf separates this period, in the Godavari valley as elsewhere in India, from the first historical data and it is not until Asoka's time that the country of the lower Godavari occurs in historical records. In 260 B.C., Asoka conquered the kingdom of Kalinga and extended his influence across the Godavari, which was then the southern boundary of that kingdom, into the realm of the Andhra dynasty. The famous rock-hewn caves in the vicinity of Bezwada testify to the prevalence of Buddhist culture in the region between the Kistna and the Godavari at least as late as the 5th century A.D. A number of stupas and viharas near Kottupalli and Korukonda in Rajahmundry Taluq, as well as at Yerrampalle in Chodavaram, appear to belong to this period, and a small cave with the sculptured figure of a reclining Buddha near Yellandu indicates the one-time existence of Buddhism in the wooded lowlands beyond the Eastern Ghats.

There is no need to recall in this context the changing fortunes of the Andhra, Pallava and Chalukya dynasties, which, during the first millennium A.D., successively dominated both the rich coastal region between the Godavari and Kistna river and the country now known as Telingana. But it is improbable that these dynasties were able to establish an effective and stable administration of hill-tracts inhabited by independent and unruly aboriginals.

Even when the Chola King Rajaraja (1022-62) selected Rajahmundry, a town 20 miles below the gorges, as his capital, the situation cannot have materially altered. Hindu populations in advanced stages of civilization and primitive aboriginals continued to live in close proximity without entering into more than casual contact.

Along the course of the Godavari, however, Hindu culture seems to have gradually filtered into the interior. The remains of a small temple of uncertain age, but apparently of considerable antiquity, still stand on the river-bank at Kondamodalu, a village just below the gorge, while the opposite village is called Shivagiri, evidently owing to the former existence of a Shiva shrine. The traces of mediæval Hinduism decrease in number and importance as we proceed further upstream, and above the gorges they are confined to a few broken stone images such as those to be seen in the mixed Reddi and Koya village of Koinda. Where such monuments are found, small settlements serving the needs of river-traffic may have existed, although it is equally possible that the images mark only the places of worship visited by boatmen and traders. A close parallel to such ancient shrines is afforded by the present hermitage of Parantapalli, which is frequented by many of the Hindus engaged in river-trade.

Another vestige of Hindu culture in the Reddi country is the small ruined temple near Rampa, Chodavaram, which, in my view, cannot be later than the 14th century, though it may be considerably earlier,

According to a local tradition Rama's footprints are visible on a rock near one of the temples, and this has led to the opinion that Rampa is the Pampa of the Ramayana, where Rama is said to have rested on his way to Sugriva.[1] All such identifications are naturally more or less legendary and conjectural, and failing an exact dating of the remains, we can say no more than that a Hindu shrine existed in the Reddi country at a fairly early date.

Early in the 14th century the Mohammedan armies challenged the Kakatiya Kings then ruling in Warangal and although Pratrap Rudra Deo twice extricated himself successfully from the onslaught, he was finally captured and his kingdom was placed under Mohammedan officers.

A temporary occupation of Rajahmundry in 1324 by the same Mohammedan army that overthrew the Kakatiya King, was followed by a period when the power in the Godavari Delta passed into the hands of local rulers. These rulers are described as Reddi Kings and seem to have sprung from the large Telugu caste of land-owning cultivators who to this day are known as Reddis or Kapus, for the old records refer to them as 'Sudra cultivators.' Under them prosperity seems to have reigned in the Godavari delta and Srinatha, the celebrated Telugu poet of the court of King Vema Reddi, gives in his famous *Bhimeswarapuranam* a vivid description of the Rajahmundry of that time: "The city had two lines of fortifications, with deep moats around each line. There were several temples and palaces and public buildings which have either disappeared or are scarcely recognizable in the present town. The King's city guard included a splendid array of elephants, horses, chariots and an army of brave soldiers. The lay-out of the fort and the town that sprang around it was on the sides of a hill or hills which sloped towards the river. Massive state elephants marched up and down the streets, the bells hanging on either side of them and sounding as they moved. A temple to Virabhadraswami and the tall and spacious palace of the Reddi Kings called Thrailokyavijaya were secure within the inner citadel and were notable landmarks for boats sailing in the river."[2]

It is not unlikely that during this period the aboriginal population in the hills was brought under superficial control, and that the system of tribal chieftains (now described as *muttadar*) was instituted or if already existing, recognized by the rulers of the country. The name 'Konda Reddis' may then have been applied to the primitive hill-men, because they were included among the subjects of the Reddi Kings.

After a short period of subjection to the Vijayanagar empire, the

1. M. R. Ry. V. N. Seshagiri Rao Avargal, *Notes on the Rampa Agency*, East Godavari District, Madras, 1931, p. 3.

2. *Statistical Appendix, together with a supplement to the District Gazetteer* (1907) *for Godavari District*, Madras, 1935, pp. 393, 394.

country was conquered by the troops of the Mohammedan King of Golconda in 1571-72. During the confusion that ensued the Hill Reddis made their first appearance in history. It is reported that they plundered Ellore, and that "when attacked they dispersed, only to re-assemble again in difficult passes and ravines."[1] Evidently such raids were only possible, if the Hill Reddis knew something of conditions in the lowlands and had learnt to covet their products. It seems improbable, however, that these raids were entirely of the Hill Reddis' own devising, for, unlike the warlike hill-tribes of Assam and Burma, who regarded raiding as a normal sport and seized every opportunity of falling on the more effeminate populations of the plains, the Reddis possess no institutions or traditions which suggest that war ever played a vital role in their culture. Indeed, in the light of subsequent events we are tempted to consider these raids as instigated either by their own non-aboriginal chieftains or by adventurers, who, profiting from the general disorder, roused the excitable hillmen and led them into the plains on plundering expeditions.

With some difficulty the disturbances were ultimately suppressed and for almost three centuries the hillmen do not figure in historical records.

In 1686 A.D., the Emperor Aurangzeb overthrew the Kingdom of Golconda and the country round Rajahmundry became a province of the Northern Circars. There was, however, no improvement in the administration, and it was only when, in 1724 A.D., the Nizam of the Deccan became independent of Delhi and appointed his own representatives in the provinces that an attempt was made to restore order. This attempt met with little success and disturbances continued for many years. In 1752 A.D., part of the Northern Circars was ceded to the French, who were subsequently defeated by a British army. After many vicissitudes a treaty was concluded in 1766 A.D., whereby the Nizam handed over to the British the Northern Circars with the exception of Guntur, which was ceded later.

Thus the country on both sides of the Godavari below the gorges has been under British administration for almost two centuries, but the hill-tribes were for a long time left to themselves, and in the backward areas, such as the Chodavaram Taluq, the regular collection of revenue was not begun until the end of the 19th century.

Quite different was the political status of the country above the gorges. The right bank of the Godavari formed and still forms part of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions and the strip of country extending on the left bank as far as the Bastar boundary, now described as the Bhadrachalam Taluq, did not come under British rule until 1860. Both these traces have been held since 1324 A.D., by the family of the present Raja

1. *Gazetteer of the East Godavari District*, Vol. I., p. 33.

of Paloncha, who is still also the Zamindar of Bhadrachalam. The Samasthan of Paloncha covers about 1,200 square miles of territory of which approximately 240 square miles form the hill-tract stretching between the Godavari and the Madras border. Thus practically all the Hill Reddis of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions live within the estate of the Raja of Paloncha and are administered by the officers of the Samasthan.

The Bhadrachalam Taluq, on the other hand, which belonged until 1860 A.D., to the Nizam's territory, is now part of the East Godavari Agency Tract, which comprises also the Nugur, Chodavaram, Ellavaram, and Polavaram Taluqs. A large part of the population consists of Hill Reddis and Koyas, and it was here that the initial failure to afford these aboriginal tribes adequate protection against the incursions of outsiders, once their seclusion had been broken, led ultimately to a series of grave disturbances known as the Rampa Rebellion. Since later we will have to deal at length with the effects that contact with non-aboriginals is exerting on the Reddis' economic and social position, it will be useful to cite in some detail the circumstances which resulted in that insurrection.

At the time of the cession of the Northern Circars to the East India Company the Rampa country, which falls now within the Chodavaram Taluq, was found in the possession of a ruling chief alternatively styled zamindar, *mansabdar,* or raja. The earliest records describe the Rampa Zamindar as a ruler as independent as the Raja of Bastar, and though he was himself not a Reddi, the hereditary chieftains or *muttadar* of the Hill Reddis recognized him as their feudal lord. How the Rampa *mansabdar* originally gained possession of the country and by what means they succeeded in controlling the independent and elusive hill-people is not known, but whatever power they wielded they concentrated on the extraction of tribute and did not interfere with the internal affairs of the Reddis.

At the time of the revenue settlement of 1802-1803 the Rampa country seems to have been " entirely disregarded as if it had not existed and no settlement of any part was made." Subsequently the *mansabdar* Ram Bhupati Devu is reported to have seized some villages in the plains, but was driven from them and made to acknowledge " for ever the sovereignty of the Company." In 1813 A.D., as settlement was made with Ram Bhaupati Devu for the first time. " The villages he had taken were restored to him as *mokhasas,*[2] and, along with his ancestral possessions in the hills, were confirmed to him free of *peshkash*[3] on con-

1. *Gazetteer of the East Godavari District*, 1907, p. 272. The following quotations in inverted commas are all from this Gazetteer, pp. 272-274, unless otherwise indicated.

2. *Mokhasas* are villages leased out by Government against a fixed revenue. Here, as in other quotation, I have written certain vernacular terms in italics so as to achieve consistency with the rest of the book. I have not, however, altered the anglicized plural-forms of the original texts.

3. *Peshkash* is the fixed land-revenue payable to Government by estate owners.

dition that he maintained order in them and prevented incursions into the low country. He appears to have leased his villages to certain subordinate hill-chiefs or *muttadars*[1] whom he required to keep order in their own charges and from whom he received an income of Rs. 8,750 per annum. These were the ancestors of the present *muttadars*."

Ram Bhupati Devu died leaving no legitimate male heir and was succeeded by his daughter. But after years of disturbances of various kinds, she surrendered the estate in favour of her illegitimate half-brother.

"In 1848, after protracted negotiations, the *muttadars* agreed to accept this man as *mansabdar* and to perform their old police duties, on condition that their united quit-rents should not exceed Rs. 1,000 and that the *mansabdar* should never attempt to exact more from them.

The *mansabdar* agreed to this, but quickly broke his promise. 'His confiscations of *muttas* and oppression of the people resulted in risings against his authority in 1859 and 1861; and such was the hatred he inspired that when, in 1862, he attempted to go and reside in his property an insurrection arose which had to be put down by a strong force of police. He continued his depredations, however, and by 1879 had succeeded in getting eight *muttas* into his own enjoyment, had doubled the quit-rent in several others, and was deriving a considerable revenue from taxes on fuel and grazing and other unauthorized cesses.

He succeeded in doing this largely by making it appear, sometimes by disgraceful devices, that all his actions had the sanction of Government; and unfortunately the officers of the Government neither adequately realized what was going on in his country nor made sufficient endeavours to protect the *muttadars*. They forgot that the agreement of 1848 was made under the authority of Government; and some of the *muttadars* who complained of the *mansabdar's* exactions were referred to the Civil Courts, though the hillmen are notorious for their dread of the plains. The growing discontent among the people was increased by new abkari regulations preventing the drawing of toddy for domestic purposes and leasing the toddy revenue to renters. These renters demanded that the *muttadars* should pay fees (called *chigurupannu*) for the right to tap toddy, and the *mansabdar* threatened to levy an additional tax, called *modalupannu*, at the rate of one-half or two-thirds of the *chigurupannu*.

This was the last straw, and was the immediate cause of the 'Rampa Rebellion' of 1879. The unpopularity of the police, who had assisted in introducing the new toddy rules and also oppressed the people on their own account, was a contributory cause. The people said that 'they could not stand all the taxes that were being imposed; that three years ago came the *chigurupannu*; that this year the *mansabdar* was demand-

1. *Muttadars* are ordinarily owners of estates auctioned by Government but here the term is used for the chieftains, who paid tribute to the *mansabdar*. (cf. pp. 168-178).

ing *modalupannu;* that the constables were extorting fowls; and that, as they could not live, they might as well kill the constables and die.' The operation of the civil law of the country was an additional grievance. Traders from the low country had taken advantage of the simplicity of the hillmen, 'who would much sooner walk into a tiger's den than put in an appearance in the Rajahmundry court,' to make unfair contracts with them, and then if these were not fulfilled according to the trader's own interpretation, to file suits against them, obtain *ex parte* decrees, and distrain as much of their property as they could lay hands on. In satisfaction of a debt of Rs. 5, cattle and produce worth Rs. 100 had been sometimes carried off in this manner, and sometimes, it was said, the formality of a suit was dispensed with, and the trader, accompanied by a friend personating an officer of the court, made the distraint without any authority whatever. The hill-people laid the blame for all this injustice on Government and Government rules and regulations, and thought that their only remedy lay in rising against the authorities."

The actual course of the rebellion is here of secondary interest and a short outline will suffice. The ringleaders were Chandraya of Lagarayi, Sambaya of Kutravada, Thamman Dora of Bhupatipalem and Ambul Reddi of Boduluru. Sambaya was apparently the grandfather of Pulikanta Sambaya the present *muttadar* of Kutravada, who is not of Reddi, but of Jangam caste, and who told me that his grandfather had been the 'guru' of the local *muttadar* and had died in jail where he had been confined for taking part in the rebellion and inflaming the insurgents with his prophecies. Thamman Dora was probably a Koya; for Koyas describe themselves in these parts as Koya Doras and today a number of *muttadar* in the vicinity of Rampa are not Reddis but Koyas.

The first outbreak of the rebellion occurred in March 1879, when six policemen were captured by disaffected tribesmen under Thamman Dora near Boduluru, a village 22 miles north of Chodavaram, and kept in custody for several days. "Then they were taken to 'Kodigandi,' where, under a tamarind tree, Thamman Dora, with his own hand, severed the heads of the head-constable and one constable as a sacrifice in the presence of 200 of his hillmen."[1] Later, the rebels attacked the Chodavaram police station and succeeded in burning the police station at Addatigala, the headquarters of the Ellavaram Taluq. Soon the whole Rampa country was ablaze and the rebellion assumed serious proportions.

"In the next month (April) the disturbance spread to the Golconda hills of Vizagapatam, and in July to the Rekapalli country in Bhadrachalam, but the causes of the disaffection there were essentially different from those operating in Rampa itself."

In Rekapalli, then under the Central Provinces administration,

1. M. R. Ry. Seshagiri Rao Avargal, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

*podu* (*i.e.*, shifting) cultivation had been almost unrestricted and the assessment on it had been only four annas an axe. But when this area was transferred in 1863 the Madras Government almost trebled the assessment, excluded the cultivators from certain tracts, and levied a tax on the felling of certain species of reserved trees. These new taxes and restrictions were considered a grievance, and it was for this reason that the Rampa leaders found adherents in the Rekapalli country.

"The disturbed area now comprised over 5,000 square miles of wooded and hilly country. The operations of the troops were much hampered by the nature of the ground, and the malcontents took advantage of their superior knowledge of the country to maintain a harassing guerilla warfare, avoiding all direct encounters with the troops, but attacking isolated police stations and burning or looting the villages of those who assisted the authorities. Troops were hastened up to the country, and by the end of 1879 the Government forces included besides several hundred police drafted from neighbouring districts, as many as six regiments of Madras infantry, two companies of sappers and miners, and a squadron of cavalry and a wing of infantry from the Hyderabad contingent."

Though in Rampa quiet was restored in August 1879, in other areas the rebellion was not entirely suppressed until November 1880. The *mansabdar* of Rampa was deposed and Government made the settlement with the individual *muttadar* direct.

No further disturbances occurred for a considerable time, but in 1915-16 and 1922-24 there were again serious outbreaks of disorder in the hills of the Vizagapatam and East Godavari Agencies. These were, however, of an entirely different character from the Rampa rebellion, and constituted not so much a popular rising as a successful and prolonged defiance of law and order by armed groups of malcontents and bandits, who found shelter in the mountains and intimidated the hill-people into giving them sporadic support.

From our point of view the history of the Rampa Rebellion is important in two respects: it shows firstly that aboriginals, even if inherently not of a warlike character are capable of considerable efforts when driven to extremities, and secondly that it is both inexpedient and dangerous to allow the control and exploitation of aboriginal populations to fall into the hands of unscrupulous and unsupervised outsiders, who, although not directly responsible to Government, are backed by the authority of the police and the law-courts. For, while the outsiders understand how to use the laws of the land to their own advantage and are assisted in their designs by the aboriginal's dread of contact with the police, the aboriginals are in the unenviable position that any use of force, which is the only means in their power to free themselves from the oppression of their exploiters, brings them into conflict with the

authority of the State.

In the East Godavari Agency the conditions of the aboriginals have considerably improved since the times of the Rampa Rebellion. The necessity of devising special methods for administering primitive populations was then forcefully brought before the eyes of the authorities, and steps have been taken to protect the aboriginals from the encroachment of outsiders and to fortify them through education for the competition with other sections of the population. How far these steps have been successful, and to what extent the regulations laid down for the protection of the Reddis are adequate for preventing their exploitation by unscrupulous traders from the plains, will be discussed in a later chapter, but the general trend of the policy adopted towards the aboriginals is indicated by the creation of an Agency, which is officially described as "a country inhabited mainly by a simple and ignorant people, who by reason of their ignorance and excitable temperament need handling with tact and sympathy, and by reason of their backward condition, require to be sheltered from the subtleties of the law and the wiles of the more civilized traders and lawyers of the plains."

In Hyderabad, the Hill Reddis have, until recent years, led an inconspicuous life in a remote and inaccessible corner of the Samasthan of Paloncha and no information as to their condition has found its way into official publications. Even when, in 1936, the Samasthan of Paloncha was taken under the control of the Nizam's Court of Wards, the policy towards the aboriginals remained that of *laissez-faire* and little was done to alleviate their difficulties; and these were not unlike the grievances which, half a century earlier, had driven the Reddis of the Rampa country to armed rebellion. In a note on administrative problems compiled during the first months of my stay among the Reddis I drew attention to their very unfavourable economic situation and suggested a number of reforms designed to relieve the hard-pressed aboriginals. Though many of my recommendations, which are outlined in Chapter XV, were considered too revolutionary, orders were passed in July 1941 defining certain rights of the Reddis in regard to the use of forest-produce and providing for their protection against exploitation by outsiders. At that time most of the material for this book had already been collected and even when I left the Reddi country three months later, it was not yet possible to judge the full effect of the new regulations. The picture of the Reddis' economic condition given in Chapters XIII and XIV reflects therefore essentially the position as it existed in the years preceding 1941, while in Chapter XV, I have discussed recent developments and the progress achieved in the last two years.

## CHAPTER III

# APPEARANCE AND PERSONALITY.

### PHYSICAL TYPE.

THE cultural heritage of all groups of Reddi shows certain common elements, which, in spite of local variations, clearly indicate their tribal identity; in their racial characteristics, on the other hand, there is so great and far-reaching a diversity that even those familiar with the tribe often find it difficult to identify a Reddi with certainty when encountering him among neighbouring populations. But although some Reddis could pass as Koyas and others as low-caste Telugus, the types predominant in the tribe are of a distinct order.

No anthropometric work has yet been done among the Reddis, but judging from visual observation I would describe them as considerably more primitive than either Koyas, Bastar Gonds, or Konds. While the ratio of progressive types is larger than among Chenchus, there are individuals with facial features as primitive as those of many a Chenchu.

In general the Reddi is of small, sturdy stature, with legs that are short compared with the length of the body. He is, as far as I can judge, between dolicho and mesocephalic, with a forehead that is as a rule slightly retreating, though straight foreheads do occur. Most Reddis give the impression of great breadth of face, an impression very different from that created by the average Telugu of the lowlands. Broad-palmed and broad-soled with short fingers and toes, the Reddi's hands and feet may in extreme cases be termed spatulate. Corpulence is rare among men, but young women are often plump. The breasts of women are never very full and the nipples are often large with spherical and protrudent areolæ. The skin-colour varies from a very light copper brown to dark chocolate, but medium brown with a ruddy and sometimes yellowish tinge may be considered the average. The grain of the skin is noticeably coarse. The hair is usually wavy but almost straight as well as curly hair are found among Reddis (cf. Figs. 14 and 15).

A primitive type, frequent throughout the tribe and most common in the remoter hill-villages, is characterized by a broad, sometimes heart-shaped face with a small pointed chin, high and prominent cheek bones and a flat nose, whose bridge is straight, sometimes slightly concave and not excessively broad though the nostrils are wide. The lips

are not particularly full and the mouth is usually rather weak. The eyes are brown, occasionally almost hazel, and never deep set. The black hair is as a rule curly with moderate facial growth. The skin is copper coloured to medium brown and never very dark. Small stature is generally associated with this type, of which Gurgunta Pandaya (Fig. 4, 5) and Golla Lachmaya (Fig. 6) of Gogulapudi may be considered good representatives.

Even more primitive in certain respects is a type with a pronounced prognathism as its outstanding feature. Here the mouth is protruding snoutlike, the lips are very full, and the nose, flat and deeply depressed at the root, is often slightly upturned. The forehead is massive and retreating. Figures 7, 12 and 19 can be taken as illustrative of this type.

Another type which is found in the Godavari Region as well as in the remoter parts of the Northern Hills shows a roundish face, short fleshy nose with wide nostrils, straight bridge, slightly or moderately depressed at the root, a childlike mouth with very full lips, often everted and parted even in repose, and a rounded, receding chin; the forehead is fairly high and straight, the eyes dark, rather small and narrow. The black hair is wavy or curly and beard and moustache are scanty; individuals of this type have as a rule very little hair on chest and limbs. Most of these characteristics are observable in Pogal Ramaya of Kutturvadda in the Godavari Region (Fig. 10), a curly haired young man of Siramkota in the Northern Hills (Fig. 13), and a Reddi of Koinda, who wears the typical small beard of older men (Fig. 11).

In the Northern Hills we find, moreover, a type in which extreme coarseness of features is coupled with heavier and taller build. Prominent supra-orbital ridges overshadow the eyes, the broad short nose is depressed at the root and the nasal bridge often concave; the lips are comparatively narrow, the chin well developed; very lightly waved. sometimes almost straight hair is met in individuals of this type, which is illustrated by the photograph of a woman from Chapraí near Siramkota (Fig. 16). Another coarse featured type, with marked prognathism, is represented by Gurgunta Chinnaya of Gogulapudi (Fig. 8); his face is comparatively long, the nose prominent with a long high bridge, the mouth very full, and the chin receding; the facial hair is ampler than usual, (cf. Figs. 78, 79).

A number of intermediate types, which we need not discuss in detail, will be recognized in the accompanying photographs.

There can be no doubt that various racial elements have contributed to the Reddis' present physical make-up. A Veddid strain is well pronounced, and some individuals such as the girl in Figure 18 show even certain affinities with the Malids of Southern India. The yellowish tinge of skin, which is rare among the surrounding Telugu populations, may be due to an old contact with the Reddis' Austro-

FIG. 4. Pandaya of Dornalpushe (full face).

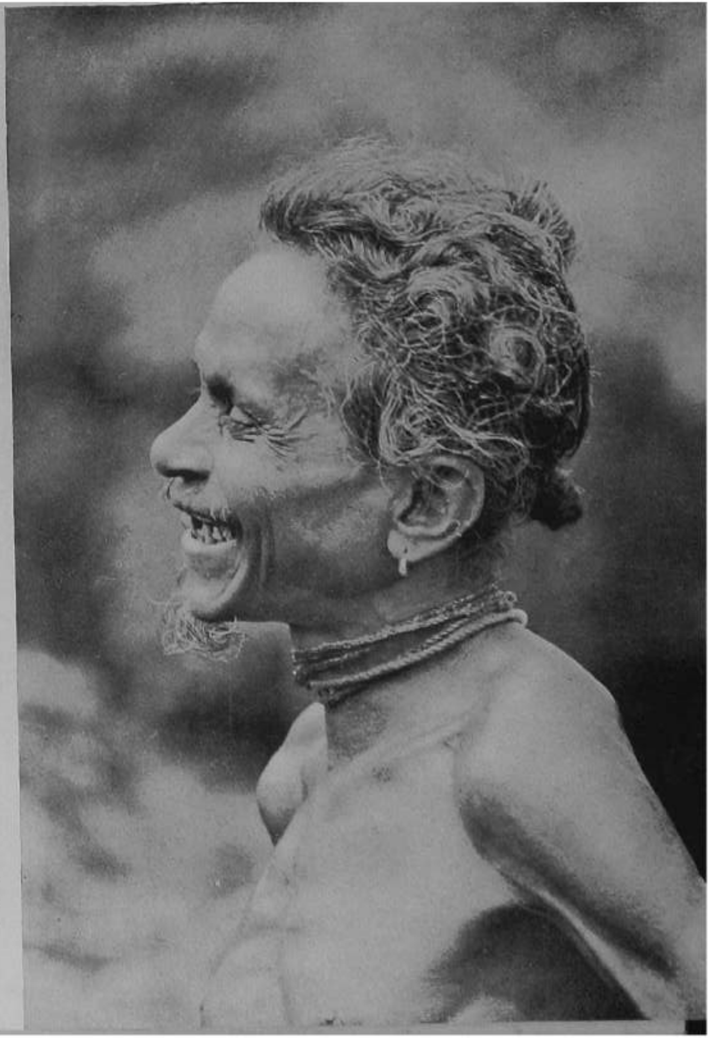


FIG. 5. Pandaya of Dornalpushe (side face).

FIG. 6. Lachmaya of Gogulapudi.

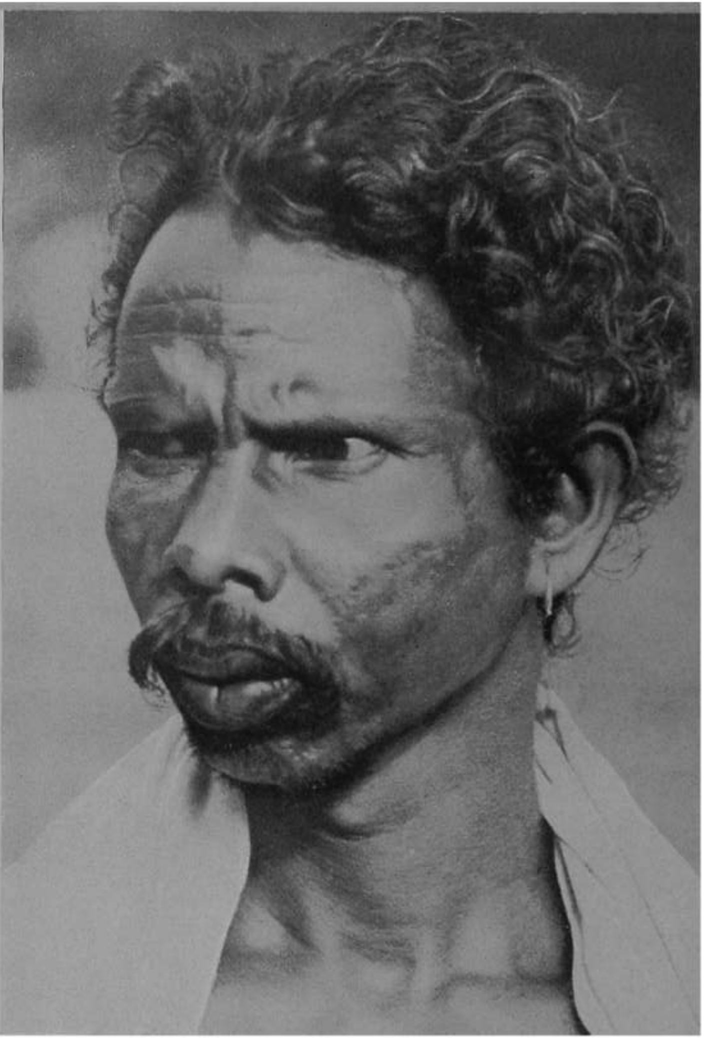


FIG. 7. Ramaya of Borreddigudem.

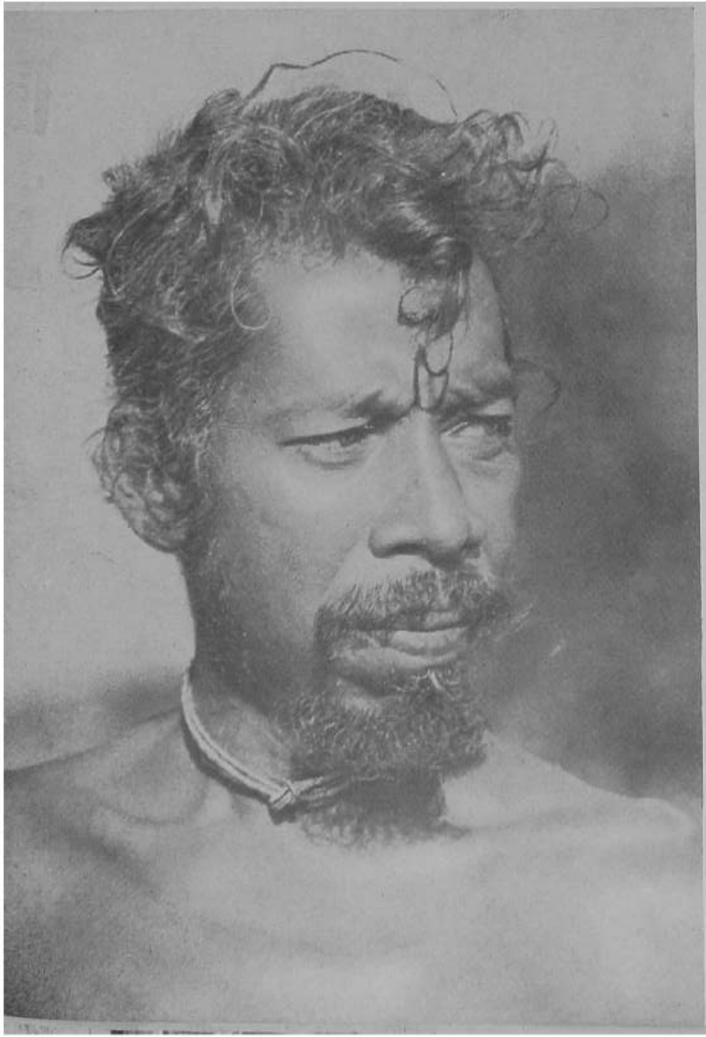


Fig. 8. Chinnaya of Dornalpushe.

Fig. 9. Rajaya of Siramkota.

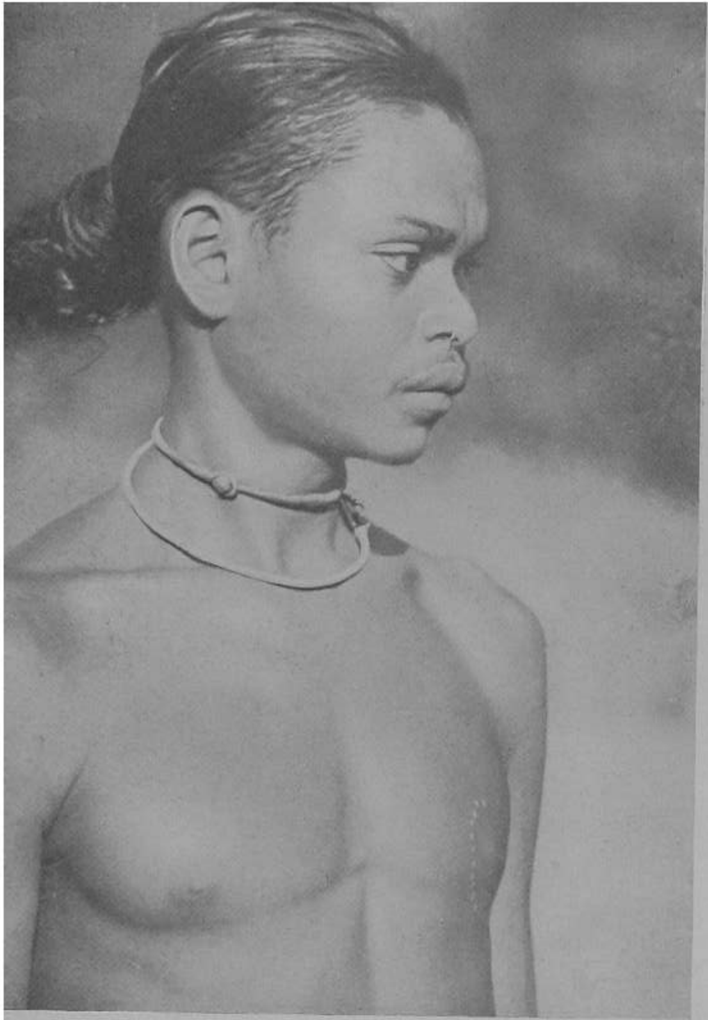
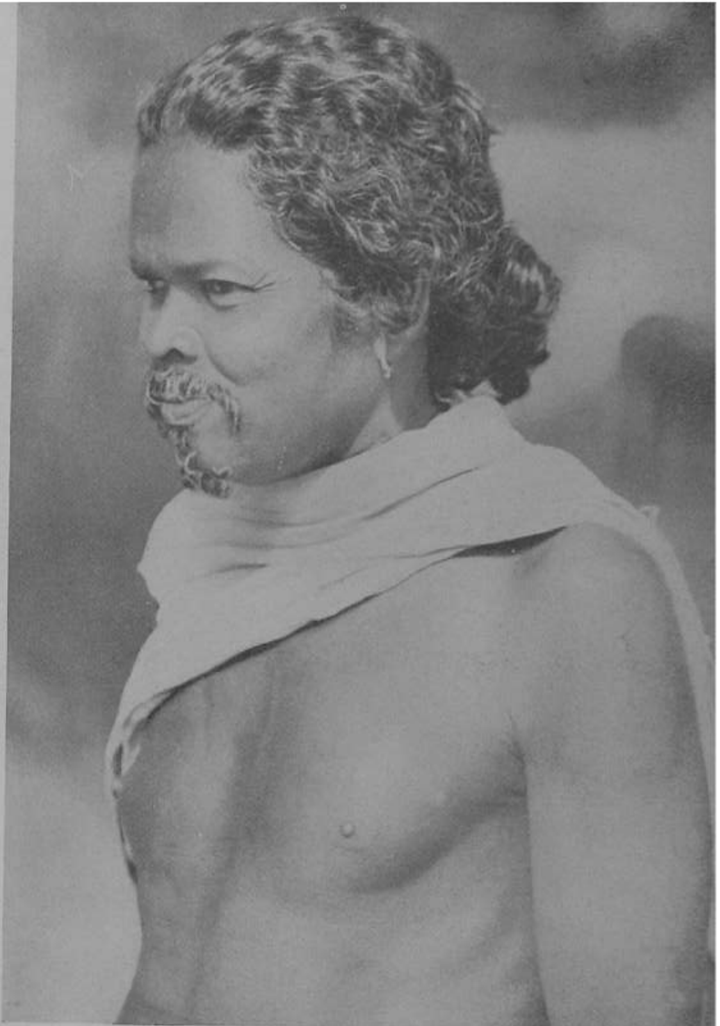


FIG. 10. Ramaya of Kutturvada.

FIG. 11. Pentaya of Koinda.



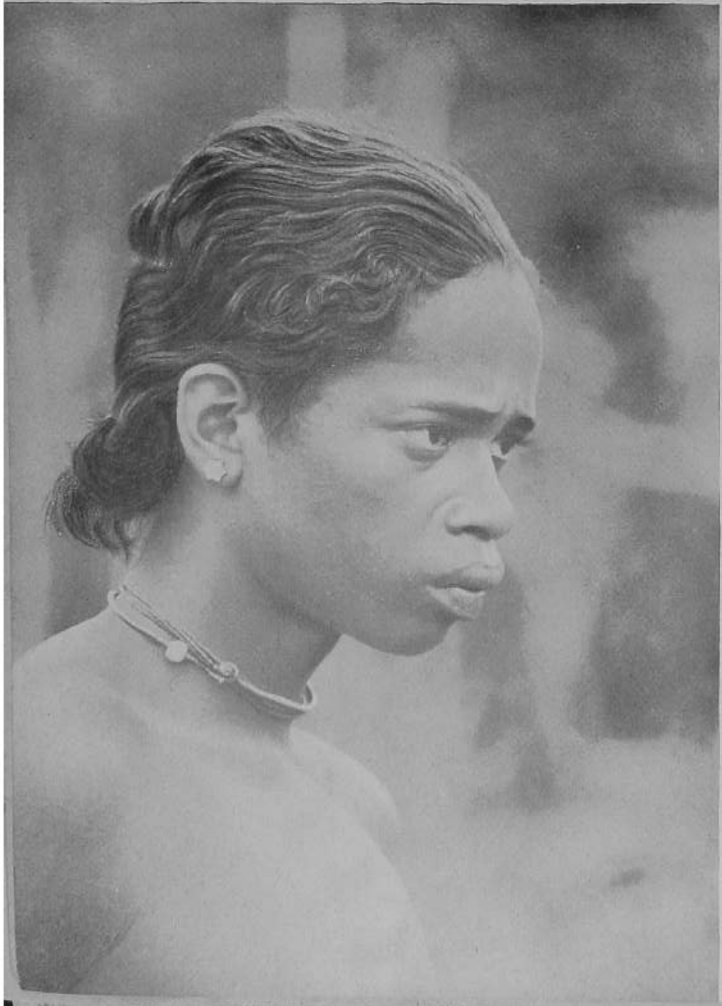


Fig. 12. Potaya of Gogulapudi.

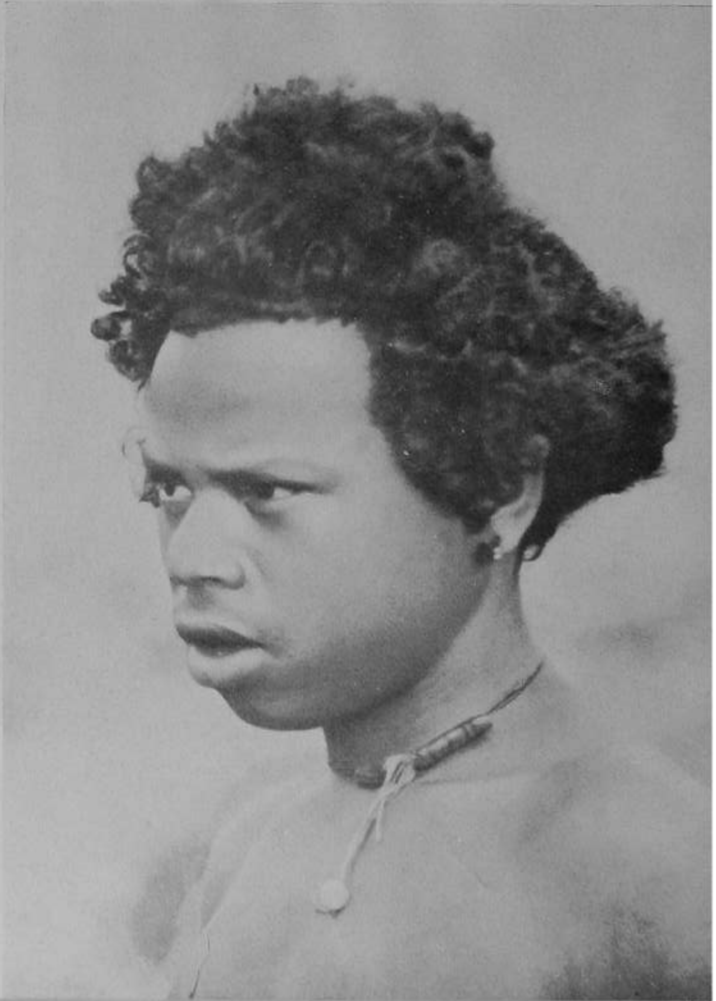


Fig. 13. Viraya of Siramkota.

FIG. 14. Rajamma of Kakishnur.

FIG. 15. Pandamma of Dornalpushe.

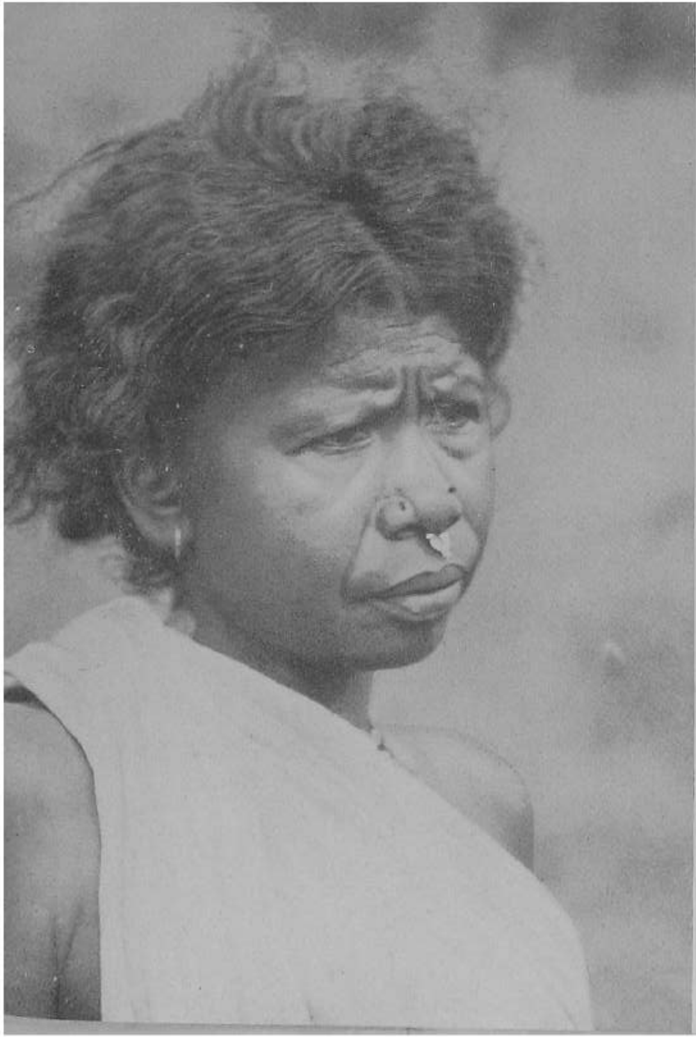


FIG. 16. Sitamma of Chaprai.

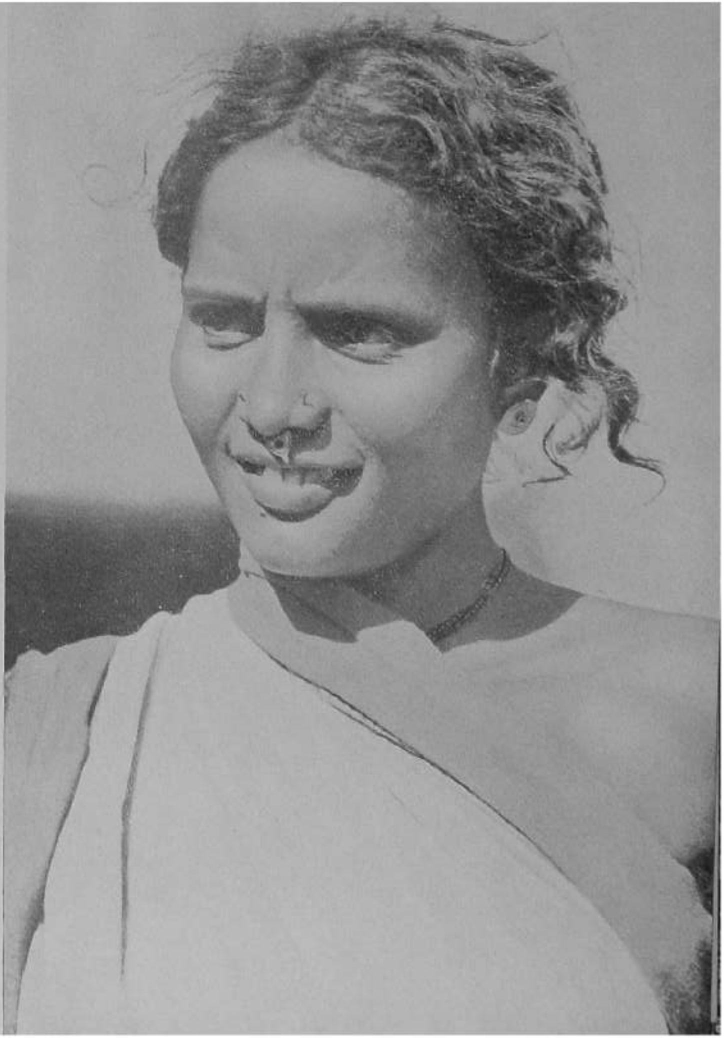


FIG. 17. Gangamma of Gogulapudi.

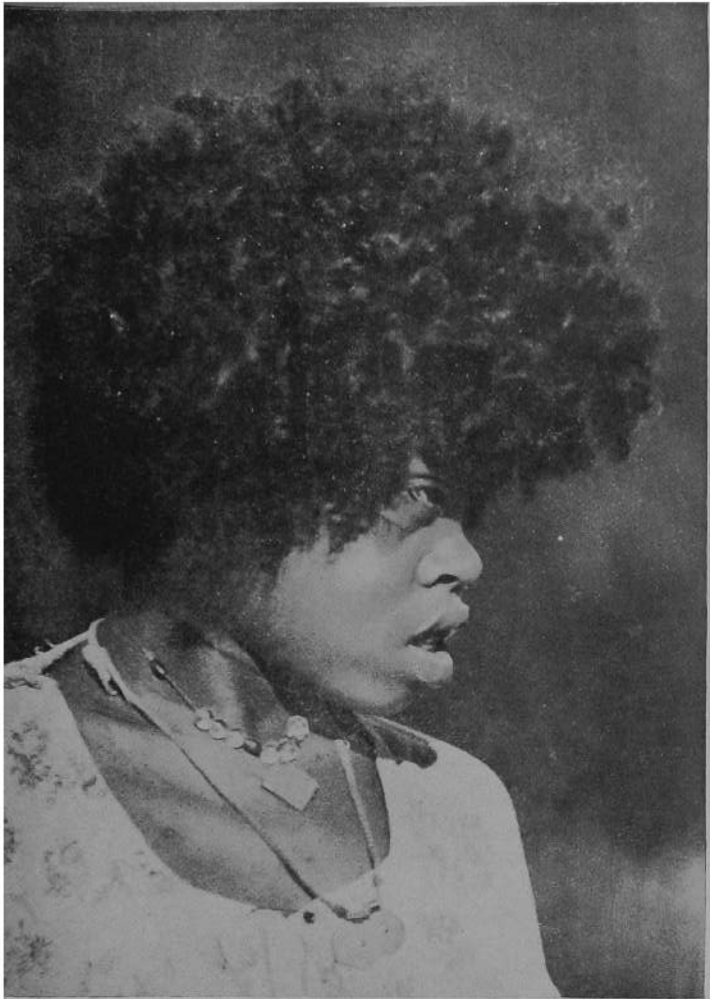


Fig. 18. Mangamma of Parantapalli.

Fig. 19. Lachamma of Repalli.

asiatic neighbours to the north, but no definitely Mongoloid traits are found among the Reddis. The more progressive types, on the other hand, probably reflect the impact of the Telugu populations which have long surrounded the Reddis' habitat. It is mainly in the contact areas that we find individuals with progressive, regular features, long narrow faces and taller, slenderer build. The darkest skins are also met in these contact zones and it seems that the proportion of individuals with a skin of the dark chocolate brown of Malas and the lower Telugu castes is much greater in the villages on the Godavari banks than in the interior of the hills. Miscegenation between Reddis and members of other castes, though never legalised by marriage, has undoubtedly left its mark on the racial composition of the tribe.

Compared to the women of other races of the Eastern Ghats, Reddi girls are, with some exceptions, not particularly attractive. This is partly due to their sturdiness of limb and a lack of gracefulness of movement, but partly also to a mode of dress which does little to enhance their æsthetic appeal. Unlike such hill-tribes as the Bondos and Gadabas, who produce colourful though scanty attires from local materials, the Reddis have adopted the dress of the neighbouring Telugu population; but they seldom have the means of procuring any but the cheapest type of clothes and many Reddis in the hills possess only a few torn and discoloured rags.

### *Dress and Ornaments*

A Reddi woman's dress consists generally of a sari, a small loin-cloth and in some areas also a bodice. In the hills, both to the south and to the north, the women wear short, narrow saris, which they wrap several times round the hips, throwing one end over the left shoulder. Young girls generally see that the folds cover the breasts, but once a woman has had a child she frequently leaves her breasts uncovered, and in the Northern Hills it seems quite usual for a woman to work in the fields or in the jungle with nothing but a cloth round the hips. Where the Reddis live in symbiosis with plains folk the women conform more to the style of dress common among the Telugu cultivating castes. They wear the sari girded well above the knees with one end drawn between the legs. While the loin-cloth, which is definitely an undergarment, and the sari in its various forms are universal in the Reddi country, the custom of wearing a bodice prevails mainly in the villages on the Godavari and particularly in those within the boundaries of Hyderabad. Here, as well as in the Rampa Country, most women possess also full length saris, which they wear at weddings and on ceremonial occasions, and after the faded attire of every day, these bright clothes with their pleasing colour combinations create a festive atmosphere.

In the hills women wear necklets of plaited cane and strings of small shells, and sometimes they possess a few glass beads and cheap

metal bracelets. But the Reddi girl of a Godavari village is more ambitious, favours a heavier type of bracelet with embossed openings, and wears not one or two, but six or eight coloured glass bangles. If possible she adds to the plain circular anklet common to all Reddi women, a shouldered type worn by Lambaras, and her fingers and toes are adorned with brass and aluminium rings.

Most Reddi women have one or two strings of beads of the usual varieties obtainable in this part of the Telugu country and sometimes necklets of metal, rigid hoops or flat coin-like discs on a string. The respectably married also wear the *pustie*[1] on its saffron coloured string. It is usual to have the septum and the nostrils and the lobes of the ears pierced in childhood and to plug the holes with small pieces of stick until suitable ornaments have been acquired. Pendants, often loaded with glass are considered the proper decoration for the septum, while small metal rings and studs are fixed in one or both nostrils as well as the lobes of the ears. In the hills these ornaments are rather inconspicuous, but among the women of the Godavari villages, the Rampa Country and particularly the *muttadar* families there is a growing tendency for more ostentatious jewellery, and one often sees large embossed metal nose-rings as worn by Erkalas and Lambaras, and nose and ear studs in the form of embossed metal shields, sometimes round and sometimes oval; these shields are also worn as finger and toe rings.

Considerations of 'decency' such as have prompted the women's adoption of a bodice do not seem to have carried much weight with the men in the choice of their dress, and the great majority of Reddis still prefer to wear only a small *gosh batta*, *i.e.*, a narrow strip of cloth drawn in between the legs and looped over a twined cord which, usually made of *Bauhinia vahlii* fibre, is wound several times round the waist; into this cord they stick a knife or bill-hook, handle upwards and blade against the skin. When they feel chilly they wrap a plain cotton cloth round the shoulders, and some men possess turbans, which they wear on ceremonial occasions. In the villages on the Godavari and in the Rampa Country, it has now become customary that at weddings, the groom is dressed in a white dhoti, and occasionally younger men adopt the dhoti for every day use. A few men have taken to wearing shirts or white cotton vests, and during a dance, when everybody dresses up, ragged coats and other curious wearing apparel long discarded by plains men or subordinate officials are donned by their proud possessors, much to the envy of the other dancers.

Men have few ornaments. In the hills Reddis make and wear necklaces of plaited caryota fibre that fasten in front with loop and button (Fig. A), or a double row of black beads threaded with an occasional sky blue or red bead. But among the Reddis on the Goda-

1: *Pustie* is synonymous with *tali*, the general Indian term for the bridal locket.

vari there seems to be a growing tendency to discard most of the simpler ornaments and to wear either no jewellery at all or the flashy types seen among the lowland people, such as ear rosettes of coloured glass. However, there are many men who still wear small brass rings in earlobes or nostrils, and plain wristlets of brass or white metal. The only men's ornaments of any value are the silver belts, formed of small plain or embossed plaques; these are prized heirlooms and are owned by only a very few individuals. Small turmeric smeared packets of tightly folded paper purchased in bazaars, strings of cowries, or braids of a man's own hair are worn round the neck, wrist or ankle as amulets and charms to ward off evil and ill-luck.

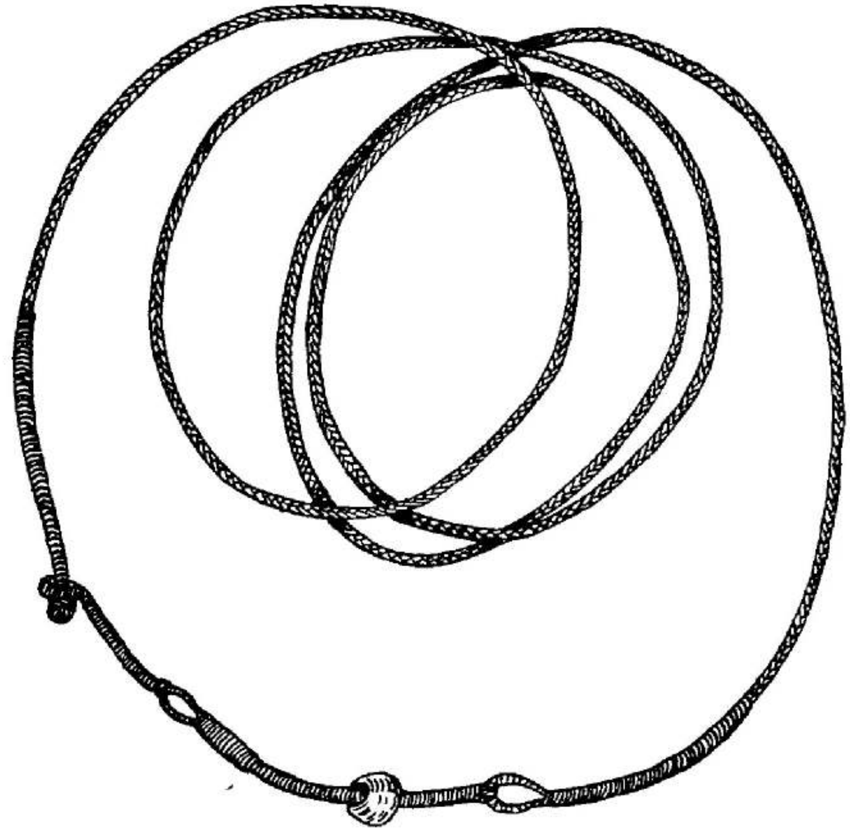


FIG. A. Necklace of plaited palm fibre.

Children often wear strings of beads round the waist, neck, wrist or ankle, an opaque, sky blue variety being particularly popular, and on these strings sometimes hang one or more brass pellet-bells, which tinkle as the child plays. Till they are four or five children wear no clothes, but at this age a boy generally begins to wear a *gosh batta* and

a girl is given a small piece of cloth to tie round her hips.

The hair of both men and women is worn long. Men twist it into a knot at the back of the head secured with a strand of jungle fibre or a cord of their own old hair. The more Teluguized Reddis in the Godavari Region shave the front part of the head as far as the apex of the crown, but they do not perform this operation very frequently, probably not more than two or three times a year. In the Northern Hills the hair is often cut straight across the forehead, forming a small fringe as it grows, and this style gives the forehead a look of squareness.

The more conservative Reddi women part their hair in the centre and screw it into a bun at the back of the head. But where Reddis have come into contact with Koyas they often dress the hair in Koya fashion, smoothing it well with oil, parting it in the centre and folding the ends under so that it appears bobbed. Flowers and tillets of silver or brass chain are worn in the hair on ceremonial occasions.

Children's hair is shaved frequently until they are about four or five years old; from this time on the hair is allowed to grow, but boys have the front of the head shaved periodically in the same manner as adult men.

Tattooing is not a universal custom, but some women have learnt the art and operate on their relations and friends. They mix a little of the fruit of the *giri ginjal* with charcoal in the palm of the hand, then taking a thorn and dipping the point into the paste, prick out the design on the patient's skin. The most common marking for women is a vertical line about an inch and a half long down the middle of the forehead, running almost to the root of the nose; but women with light skins have dots marked on their cheek bones and chin. Some Reddi men in the Godavari valley also have a short vertical line tattooed between the eyes and in the villages such as Katkur, where the Reddis live beside other castes, the upper arm or the inside of the lower arm is sometimes marked with such patterns as are usual in the Telugu country.

### *Personality.*

To round off our picture of the Reddi a word must be said about the less tangible aspects of his personality. In *The Chenchus*[1] I have discussed the methodological difficulties of describing in objective terms the character and psychic qualities of primitive races. And if it was difficult to record these qualities in so small and compact a group as the Jungle Chenchus of Hyderabad, it is even more difficult to formulate any generalizations in regard to the psychology of a tribe as numerous as the Reddis living under such varied conditions. For what is true of the temperament and character of a Reddi who inhabits a crowded

1. Pp. 263, 264.

village on the Godavari and subsists largely by forest labour, surely cannot apply to the independent dweller of the hills who lives in a small hamlet of two or three houses. The following pages should therefore be considered as a record of personal impressions, and not as the result of systematic psychological research.

My first impression of the Reddi was marred by circumstances, which, as I have already mentioned (cf. pp. 6, 7), resulted from the machinations of outsiders. Throughout the first weeks I spent in Parantapalli, Kakishnur, and other river settlements I met with a wall of intangible opposition and found the Reddis on the whole elusive and morose. The bright spots were a few loquacious old men and women, who seemed unaffected by the general unfriendly atmosphere; probably because, being too old to work, they had nothing to expect or to fear from the timber merchants whose coercion prompted this unsocial attitude. Many of the younger people were quite amiable when encountered alone or when I sought them out in their fields, but as soon as they found themselves observed, they changed their tone and relapsed into sullen reticence. Much more remarkable than this attitude towards me was the fact that, in contrast to most other aboriginals, the Reddis of those river-settlements seemed rather cheerless and reticent among themselves; laughter seldom sounded from their houses, and I found many proofs that they feared and mistrusted each other. The number of murders that have occurred in recent years among Reddis of the river-settlements shows that this fear is not altogether unfounded, and there is no doubt an element of brutality and ruthlessness in the character of the Godavari Reddis, which I did not notice in the hills; I heard many stories of acts of violence quite apart from those on official record and the fact that the co-villagers of a murdered man tolerate the murderer in their midst demonstrates the Reddis' casual attitude towards homicide.

It is true that on occasions they can be gay and good-humoured, liberal in their hospitality to visitors, and of considerable frankness to those whom they learn to trust, but there is another side to their character and it seems that years of exploitation have brought out a number of evil qualities, and have largely destroyed the light-heartedness, mutual helpfulness, and amiability characteristic of those Reddis who have not fallen under the yoke of outsiders. The unsocial spirit found in the river-villages is illustrated by an experience which we had in the village of Kakishnur. During a multiple-wedding I promised to contribute a pig to brighten up the menu of the marriage feast, and having ascertained the sum for which a large pig could be obtained, handed over the money to the *patel*[1] who was incidentally one of the bridegrooms. The next morning the whole wedding party came in procession to my tent to ask for baksheesh. When, besides presenting the brides

1. Village headman.

with some small ornaments and mirrors I produced only a few rupees in cash, there was great and unconcealed discontentment. Afterwards I discovered that the *patel* and one of the other bridegrooms had told no one of the money I had presented to them for the pig, but had pocketed the sum, probably hoping that in the rush of the festivities I would not notice the absence of pork. Such an action is almost unimaginable among Reddis in the hills, where the smallest gift of tobacco is shared out with meticulous care.

In the case of the pig, as well as on many other occasions, the Reddis of the Godavari villages evinced moreover a curious lack of appreciation for gifts of any description. It almost seems as if they had lost confidence in the friendly intentions of any outsider, and it is by no means improbable that they considered my tokens in the same light as the presents of cheap jewellery the merchants distribute on occasions when it is necessary to hold the Reddis' interest and encourage them to fresh efforts; perhaps they considered our attempts at winning their friendship as the device of outsiders bent on luring them into yet another dependence.

Among the Reddis of the hill villages in Hyderabad as well as those of the Northern Hills a very different mentality prevails, and when I first camped in Gogulapudi I could hardly believe that I was among the same people, so pleasant and animated was the atmosphere. Whenever they live by themselves, leading their old mode of life and retaining their economic independence, they possess all those qualities, which make the aboriginals generally liked throughout India; they are cheerful, always prepared to laugh and to see a joke, communicative, lively in their ways of talking and graphic in description, appreciative of one's interest in their conditions and customs, as well as obliging and helpful.

An experience which I had with the men of Gogulapudi shows the Reddi at his best, and is, I think, worth quoting. I had been camping in their village for over a week and the last three days had been occupied with the celebration of the Mamidi Panduga, one of their main annual feasts. On the last day of the feast many visitors had come from other villages and the dancing and drinking, which began at about ten at night, lasted till late in the morning; at my request they had even started dancing again when the sun had risen so that I could film the dance. Then everybody collapsed. Hosts and guests alike lay in the houses and slept. They would probably have slept till next morning, had not a runner brought me the news that my wife was seriously ill. By travelling through the first night and the following day I could hope to catch a train the following evening and be with her within less than forty-eight hours, but I had to start at once. I shook the headman awake and explained my predicament. At first he was aghast at the suggestion of carrying my luggage down to Katkur. Tomorrow morn-

ing they would take it to wherever I liked, but today it was impossible; they could hardly stand, their legs were shaking and their heads aching, —how could they carry my loads the nine miles to Katkur? Their condition was indeed very evident, yet I persisted with my persuasion and finally succeeded in enlisting not only their sympathy but also their help. Within three hours my luggage was packed and the men of the small settlement started heavily laden. But after a mile or so it was clear that with the best intentions in the world, they really could not go all the way with all the loads. One man literally sank to the ground and within a minute had begun to snore peacefully. There was only one thing to do: to split the luggage and proceed with much lighter loads. This was done and I left the greater part of my belongings, some of them in open baskets, in the care of two completely intoxicated men, while the remaining Reddis carried their lighter loads without a grumbling word and many jokes over an atrociously bad path down into the valley and then in moonless darkness to Katkur where we arrived late at night. When, weeks later, I recovered the luggage abandoned in the jungle, not a single item was missing.

The Reddis in the hills to the north proved equally helpful, though fortunately I had never to make so extreme a demand on their services. In villages tucked away in the forest, where they had never seen a European, they treated us after the first surprise with the utmost friendliness and spared no trouble to provide us with the meagre fruits of their land. Seldom in touch with anybody who might treat them as inferiors, these men of the hills carry their heads high. A mass of tangled hair and an unkempt beard framing their coarse features, their sturdy limbs naked but for a small ragged cloth, a strung bow, and a bundle of arrows in their hand, they tread the mountain paths with springy gait and lordly air and a look in their dark eyes that is free and unconcerned.

Independence and self-reliance is one of the marked features in the character of the Reddis of the hills, and life in very small settlements, often in a single house a mile or two from the next habitation, certainly helps to develop these qualities. Great as is the mutual helpfulness within small communities in times of stress, ordinarily the Reddi neither expects nor needs assistance; there is little institutional co-operation, and every family is largely maintained by its own efforts. The consciousness that all he possesses is the fruit of his own labour colours even his attitude towards his gods. True, he propitiates them in order to avert disease or to obtain prosperity for his crops, which are evidently largely dependent on factors outside his own control, but when you ask him whether in the beginning the gods taught man to till the ground, he is emphatic in his denial! It was man himself who discovered how to raise a crop, just as he found out how to draw wine from palm trees; the gods did not teach him anything. The Reddi's independent spirit is expressed in his intensely democratic social or-

ganization, which allows every individual to follow his own whims as long as these do not conflict with vital interests of his fellow-tribesmen. Even in the Northern Hills, where an alien feudal system has established itself among the Reddis, it has not succeeded in curbing their independent habits, and the ease and frequency with which, in this area, they will leave one village and settle in another is ample insurance against a curtailment of their personal liberty. In the Godavari villages, however, where the Reddi has become more settled, has taken to forest-labour and in many instances to plough-cultivation, he has become less mobile; he has lost his freedom of action and to a large extent his freedom of spirit.

Another trait which struck me repeatedly is the great realism of the Reddi, who seems to lack interest in all that is not apprehendable through the senses. His ideas on the supernatural world, the nature of gods, or man's fate after death are of the vaguest kind. He knows that certain rites must be performed to safeguard his health and his fields, but gives little thought to the relations between men and deities. Neither does he speculate on his own ultimate destiny. Once, after I had watched Golla Potreddi of Gogulapudi offering first fruits of grain to the departed of his family, I asked whether the deceased eat of the new millet which he had just set apart on a leaf. "Did you see them come and eat?" asked Potreddi, "well, neither did I; so how shall I know whether they come or whether they don't? My father always did like this, so I do the same." This is typical of the average Reddi's attitude towards all ritual; there is no place in his practical mind for speculation on the unseen, and even magicians do not seem to have a fundamentally different mentality. Their ability to fall at will into a state of trance and to converse with deities is a traditional technique and is devoid of emotional or mystical implication. Its avowed object is to discover and combat the causes of disease or other misfortunes, and the contact with the spiritual world is only an incidental, though necessary phase in this process.

I think that we are safe in saying that the Reddi is, in general, unimaginative and unspiritual. His religion is poor in emotional factors and is directed towards the most concrete and immediate aims. This may be one of the reasons for the complete failure of mission work among the Reddis of the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills. Other cults, and perhaps even one connected with human sacrifice, have, as we will see, been adopted by the Reddis in the course of time. But these are of the same materialistic character as their other beliefs and are not aimed at transcendental bliss or a closer union with the gods, but at averting or influencing concrete, observable occurrences.

Most of the Reddis' ritual performances are based on a system of beliefs in cause and effect, and both the ritual act and the ultimate effect lie usually within the sphere of observation, though certain as-

sumed links in the connecting chain are unobservable. The chicken sacrificed at the beginning of sowing, the sprinkling of its blood on the seed grain, and the ultimate sprouting and ripening of the crop are all subject to observation and experience. And experience confirms the belief in the effectiveness of the sacrifice, for in the overwhelming number of cases crops do sprout and ripen. Since the sacrifice of the chicken is never omitted the Reddi has no opportunity of collecting experience which might cause him to doubt the traditional belief. Within the limits of his experience both his observation and his reasoning are sound and logical: tradition says that a sacrifice at sowing time causes the crops to sprout and ripen; in at least eight out of ten cases the crops do prosper, and the Reddi's conclusion that tradition is correct is thus perfectly logical.

Yet, where his observation is applied to unfamiliar phenomena, he looks for immediate results of every action and sometimes fails to recognize the connection between a cause and a long delayed effect. This is amply demonstrated in his attitude towards foreign medicine. I found that aspirin, which afforded the patient quick relief of head-ache, and quinine, which brought down fever, were subsequently much appreciated and eagerly sought, but when my wife treated a large and badly festering wound on a man's ankle which had prevented him from walking for many months, he insisted on breaking off the treatment after ten days, because the result, though highly satisfactory in our eyes, had not come up to his expectations. Fortunately his wound continued to heal but he never admitted that our medicines had effected the cure.

Within the sphere of his own culture the Reddi observes accurately and acts rationally. It is only when he comes in contact with entirely new situations where his cultural background no longer dictates the general lines of his behaviour, and no accumulated experience helps him to gauge the ultimate consequences of his actions, that he appears simple-minded and is easily deceived and exploited. Bartering his goods or labour the Reddi often cuts a poor figure beside the shrewd trader from the plains; but if we were to turn the tables and imagine that same trader—or indeed ourselves—provided only with a bow, an axe and a digging-stick trying to avoid starvation among the jungle-clad hills of the Reddi Country, we should appreciate the great amount of practical topographic, botanical and zoological knowledge and experience of the Reddi, who manages to make a living far from wretched and uncomfortable, where few others could subsist at all.

Is it the need of concentrating all his energies on the quest for food and shelter, which causes the Reddi to be realistic and unimaginative? Commanding but a poor material outfit he seldom enjoys times of leisure and plenty when he would be free to turn his mind away from the crude essentials of life. Yet other tribes of similar economic status

evince a remarkable artistic sense, if not in the field of plastic art, then in poetry and music. The songs of the Baigas spring from genuine and often profound poetic feeling, and among the Dires, the northern neighbours of the Reddis, I have heard choral singing of fascinating beauty, power and depth of emotion. In comparison Reddi songs are poor in poetic and musical quality. When dancing and drumming men sing short couplets and these verses, often improvised, are probably the oldest type of Reddi songs. In some villages the women know longer songs, which they sing antiphonally, but most of these have obviously been picked up from neighbouring Telugu folks and are only half understood. Often when we asked for the meaning of a verse we were told: "This is the way to sing. So we have learnt. What it means we do not know."

Even poorer than the Reddis' poetic efforts is their knowledge of stories. Most men say flatly that they neither know stories nor have they ever heard another Reddi relate one. Sometimes I told them stories, hoping to prompt them to tell me one in return. They always seemed delighted with my tales, but only one of our friends in Gogulapudi could tell two or three stories and these he had heard in the house of a merchant. His ability to reproduce them—and they were typical Hindu stories—certainly does credit to his memory, but they were the only ones known in the village and this seems to suggest that the average Reddi has little taste for story-telling.

Neither do the Reddis' material possessions testify to any great æsthetic sense or pleasure in embellishment. The houses are bare of decoration and most implements are perfectly plain. Some cylindrical drums and some pounding blocks have a very simple ornamentation of zigzag lines carved in relief and on pan-pipes one sees occasionally incised geometrical patterns. Lack of technical skill is certainly not responsible for this dearth of ornamentation, for the Reddis are good carvers of wood and could easily ornament their household goods. But they seem to be little attracted by a regular pattern and I have not seen a single instance of a carving or drawing in naturalistic style. Other Indian tribes have lost their ancient crafts and with them their creative genius when products of professional craftsmen replaced home-made implements, textiles and ornaments. The Reddis, many of whom live still so secluded a life that contact with the outside world can hardly have influenced their tastes and the type of their household goods, appear never to have possessed a more developed sense for decoration. As far as applied art is concerned they stand indeed on no higher level than the Chenchus and it is only when singing and dancing that their artistic feeling is expressed in forms more developed than the inarticulate shouts and impulsive unorganized dances of those jungle-nomads.

# Part II

# ADAPTATION TO THE HABITAT

## CHAPTER IV

# HABITATIONS IN HILLS AND VALLEYS.

TODAY we find the Reddis living in two types of settlements: the small hamlets of the mountains and the larger villages situated on the banks of the Godavari or in the broad valleys of the foot-hills. These larger settlements seem to have developed as the Reddis turned from their old pursuits of food-gathering and shifting cultivation to a new economic system based on regular work for wages and, where land lends itself to ploughing, on permanent cultivation. But their traditional home is the densely wooded main ranges and the upland valleys of the Eastern Ghats, and it is to this association with mountain-regions inhabited by no other folk that they owe the name of Konda or Hill Reddis.

### *Hill Settlements*

High up in the hills, where miles of unbroken forest cover ridges, spurs and steep slopes, a few houses cling here and there to a ledge or are tucked away in the widening valley of a mountain stream. But though sometimes 2,000 and even 3,000 feet above the level of the surrounding plains, these hamlets of the Reddis are not ' hill-settlements ' such as the villages of Hill Marias, Nagas or Bondos, which, like the city in the Bible, " are set on a hill and cannot be hidden "; it is easy to pass within a hundred yards of a Reddi settlement without being aware of its existence. If you approach from a side where the fields have been cultivated in recent years, you are forewarned of human habitation by irregular patches of secondary jungle on the hill slopes, but often, emerging from the grass and thicket closely hemming in the narrow path, you almost stumble on children and dogs playing in a village-clearing. The houses with their faded grass thatch and their weather-worn wattle-walls are so much part of the jungle scene that they merge into the general landscape, and even at a short distance are lost amid the tangle of trees and creepers and the large leaves of marrows and gourds rambling over roofs, garden-fences and the surrounding bushes.

In front of the houses there is generally a level open space cleared of weeds and tree stumps, the surface of the ground hardened beneath the tread of many feet. Here in the late afternoon and the early evening the Reddis lounge and gossip and do odd jobs, and on feast days dance and serve food to visitors. It is kept tidy and clean by the women of the settlement, who sweep it at fairly frequent intervals.

Close by are the rubbish-heaps, pigsties, perhaps an open wattle-pen for goats, and if cattle is kept, which is rare in the hills, a few forked stakes to which the animals are tethered at night. The Reddis are fond of planting fruit trees near their houses; south of the Godavari mango, jack-fruit, tamarind and lime are raised near the village-sites, and in the Northern Hills there are groves of orange and sweet lime and an occasional guava tree.

Most hill-settlements are very small. A hamlet of one, two or three houses may be the only human habitation for miles, as for instance, the two-house settlement of Kutturvada high up in the hills above Parantapalli (Fig. 20). Or there may be other houses at a distance of two or three furlongs, such as in the scattered village of Gogulapudi-Dornalpushe in the Raja Madugu valley. In 1941 Gogulapudi consisted of four houses, sheltering seven families, and ten minutes walk through bamboo jungle brought one to Dornalpushe with its three separate settlements; first a single house, where three families lived under one roof, a hundred yards further on another isolated house inhabited by a couple and their children, and still further down the valley, the last and largest of the hamlets of Dornalpushe, consisting of three houses. The people of Gogulapudi and Dornalpushe[1] met almost daily and often joined each other to gossip and share palm-wine or tobacco; they celebrated the annual religious ceremonies together, and assembled on such occasions in Gogulapudi for the feasting and dancing.

Hill-settlements are rarely permanent. When the Reddis have cultivated the surrounding slopes for some time and have exhausted the possibilities of new fellings in the vicinity, they shift their houses to another site more conveniently situated for their new cycle of *podu* cutting. The people of Gogulapudi, for instance, used to live a little way up the valley at Boramadugu, but having occupied this site for about ten years they moved some five years ago to the present locality. The Dornalpushe people, on the other hand, lived further down the valley and cultivated the opposite slopes.

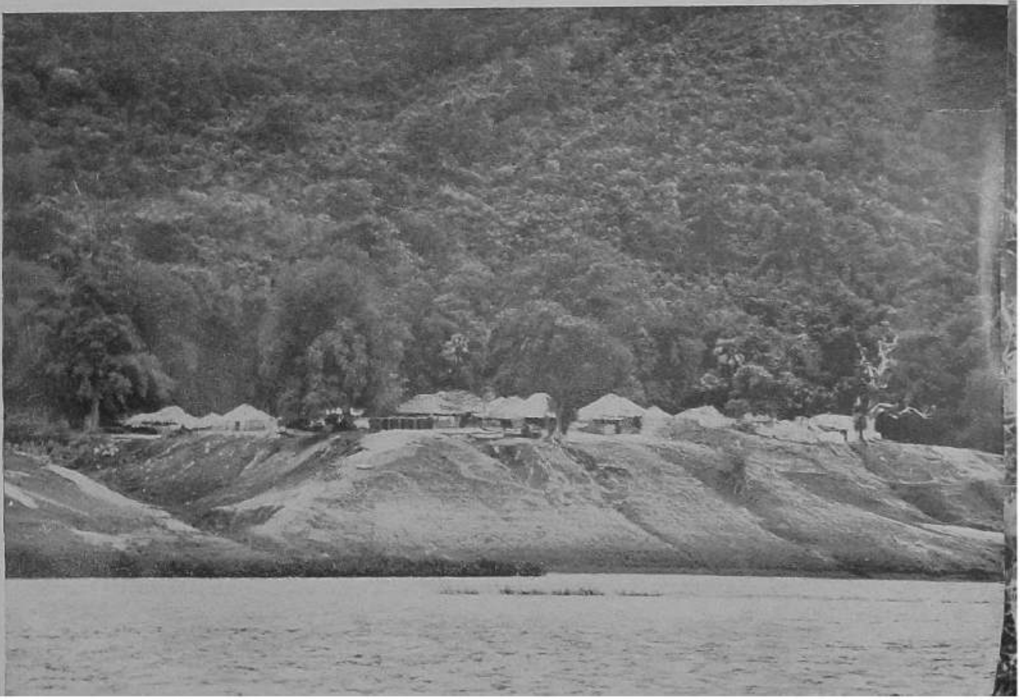
Similar conditions prevail in other hill villages south of the Godavari and in the high mountains west of Gurtedu, where hamlets of one to three houses are dotted over the hills at great distances and shifted as new hill slopes are taken under cultivation (Fig. 22). Only in particularly favourable localities have larger settlements of up to ten houses grown up, but in such cases many of the inhabitants also possess houses near their fields, where they live with their families for the larger part of the cultivating season.

Why is it, we may well ask, that people living within an area of less than a square mile, and frequently seeking each other's company should not choose to live on a common village site? A craving for

1. Throughout the book I have often referred to this twin settlement simply as Gogulapudi.

FIG. 20. The Village of Kutturvada near Papi Konda.

FIG. 21. The Village of Telladibala in the Godavari Gorge.



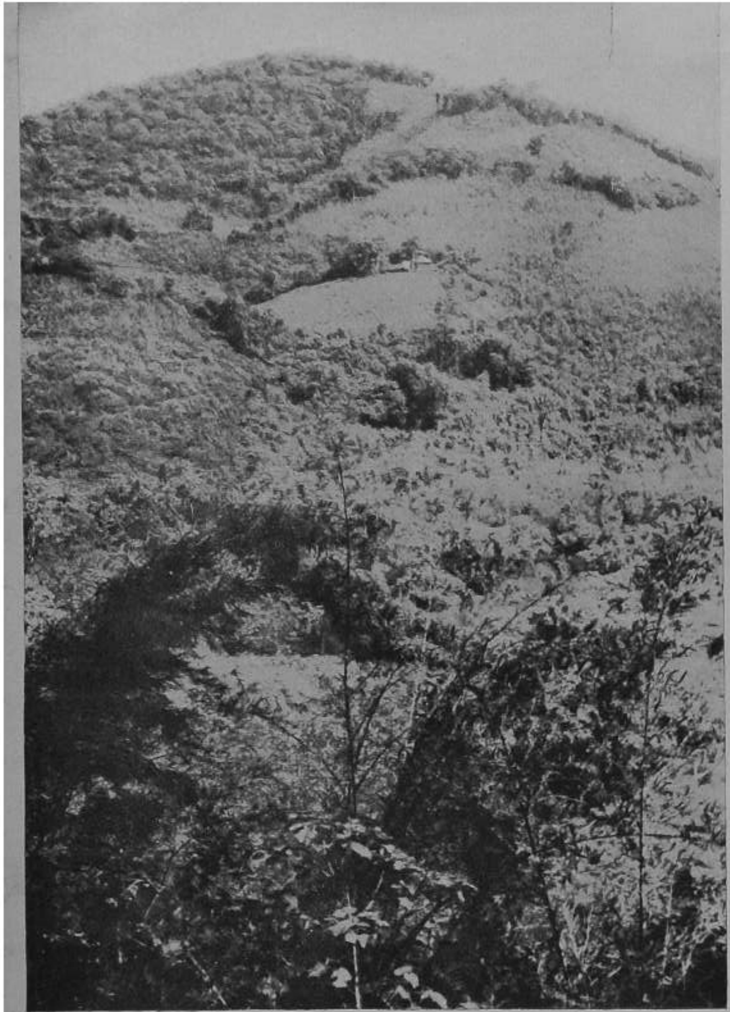


Fig. 22. A hamlet above *podu* fields in the Northern Hills.

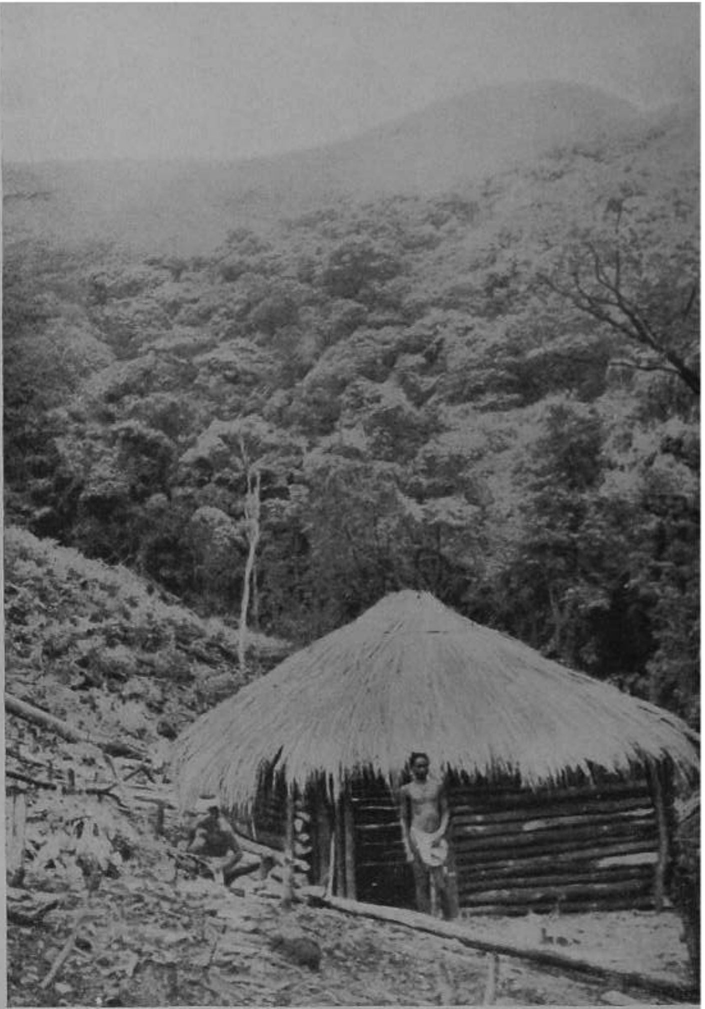


Fig. 23. A field-house in the Northern Hills.

solitude can hardly be the reason; for Reddis seem to care so little for privacy that they often share their houses with other families not necessarily related by blood. Nor would the concentration of the few households constituting a hill-settlement create any greater pressure on the yield of the jungle within easy reach of the houses, for the distances between the individual hamlets of a village are insignificant compared with the area Reddi women cover in the search for edible roots and fruits.

A possible explanation for the Hill Reddis' scattered settlements may be that a man living in a hamlet of only one or two houses can have his fields always at his door, which facilitates the guarding of crops. The Reddis shift their fields every two or three years, and a family with no other settlers within a radius of one or two furlongs, can move their cultivation round their hamlet from plot to plot within two or three minutes walk. When a village consists of ten or twelve houses such a course is not practicable, for the slopes in the immediate vicinity of larger settlements are cleared during a single period of cultivation, and once exhausted the villagers must take more distant slopes under the axe. They must then either shift the whole village to a new block of cultivation or the householders must build alternative houses near their fields. Yet it is doubtful whether the wish to have house and field close to each other is the only cause for the frequency of small settlements. In the Northern Hills I have seen isolated one-house settlements which have been maintained on the same site for two generations, although their inhabitants cultivated distant slopes, where they spent part of the year in substantial field houses. And in the large villages on the Godavari, where some fields lie at a considerable distance from the houses, I never heard the Reddis comment on the nuisance of having to walk so far, while many complained of the forest laws which prevented them from cultivating more distant slopes.

### *Valley-Settlements.*

Although there are strong grounds for assuming that in ancient times most, if not all Reddis lived in small mountain-hamlets like Gogulapudi, today only a part of the tribe persists in the old style of life, while a great number of Reddis have been drawn down to villages on the banks of the Godavari and into the broad valleys of the foot-hills. Wherever a valley opens on to the Godavari alluvial soil has accumulated, and it is here, close to the patches of fertile land, to clumps of tamarind trees and topes of palmyra palms, that the permanent settlements of Reddis have grown up. There is no longer the close association between house and hill-field, for the sites of these villages are chosen with an eye on the flat permanently cultivable land and the nearness of the river-bank to which the Reddis, as forest labourers, must

deliver bamboos and timber; the *podu*-fields, on the other hand, lie generally at some distance inland on the surrounding hills.

Often, as in Tekpalli, Tumileru and Kondapudi, the houses stand on the river bank (Fig. 21). Perched on the edge of the steep bank, often forty or fifty feet high, they command a magnificent view. This picturesque situation has its drawbacks in times of high flood when the Godavari breaks its banks and forces the inhabitants to decamp to the safety of higher ground. However, the Reddis say that there is little in their houses to spoil, and they do not mind evacuating them once in three or four years if all the rest of the time they can enjoy the advantages of ample water close at hand. In villages where every pot of water has to be carried up the river bank, the distance between house and river is certainly an important consideration.

The villages on the Godavari valley are on the whole considerably larger than the settlements in the hills: the number of houses varies from ten in Parantapalli to over forty in Tekpalli, and many villages are divided into separate settlements lying several minutes walk apart. In Kakishnur we find three settlements, consisting of two, fifteen and seventeen houses apiece, which lie at intervals of several furlongs along the course of a small perennial stream. At one time Parantapalli too was divided into three settlements: the present village, a now deserted settlement on a slightly higher ledge and the abandoned Jidugumma, a mile further downstream. The settlements of a large village are known by names of their own, descriptive of their location in regard to each other, such as upper and lower settlement, or of some physical peculiarity of the environment.

As in the hill-settlements, the houses of the river-side villages are not confined within a common fence or hedge. There is no customary village plan, and the suitability of the terrain appears to be the only determining factor in the lay-out. There is, however, usually a roughly rectangular space called the *pedda dare* within the village, large enough to accommodate the villagers, their friends and relations on public ceremonial occasions. But the *pedda dare* is not, as in the hill-settlements, regarded as the common-room of the village, and although it is often alive with playing children, men and women prefer to gossip and work in the small fenced-in enclosures adjoining the houses.

Streets radiating from the *pedda dare* are each named after some peculiar characteristic, *e.g.*, *nillu dare* (water street, *i.e.*, street leading to the water) or *silla dare* (stony street); and from these streets branch lanes or alleys described as *didi* of the respective streets, very much like the mews of a town. These thoroughfares, which are never as wide as the main street of a Telugu village and often so narrow that two men can hardly pass, are enclosed on either side by the rough alignment of wattle-fences, which here enclose most houses. Sometimes one enclosure contains two houses, the householders being relations or relations-in-law,

but a courtyard may also be shared by families without any close relationship-ties. Small quantities of garden crops, especially beans and gourds, are raised within the enclosures and small fenced-in gardens are found in a few villages sandwiched between the houses. Cattle is tethered to posts and pigs are housed in sties outside the enclosure (Fig. 26).

### *Village Foundation.*

The establishment of a new village is, at least at the present time, not a frequent occurrence, and the only two settlements where I found men who had taken part in the foundation-ceremonies were Balamamidi and Telladibala. Both villages are situated in the Godavari gorge and seem to represent break-aways from larger villages where cultivable land had become scarce and conditions for finding supplementary sources of income unfavourable.

When Reddis decide to leave their home-village and to found a new settlement they set out for the chosen site with their families and all their household goods. They camp under trees or live in leaf-shelters until the new houses are habitable. Before work on the houses begins the new settlers address themselves to the gods. Men, women and children assemble and the initiator of the new settlement takes a chicken and sacrifices it to the deity of the locality or sometimes the tutelary deity of one of the new settlers, praying to the god or goddess for protection and prosperity in the new settlement.

Telladibala, a village in the Godavari gorge, was founded by Kopal Gangareddi when he was a young man; he was born and had grown up in Kondapudi, but land being short in his home-village he and several other men emigrated and settled at Telladibala on the opposite bank. When founding the village they invoked the goddess Mutielamma whom they had worshipped as village-mother in Kondapudi and erected a small post in her honour.

Five years ago seven families from Parantapalli and Jidugumma, founded Balamamidi and were later joined by relations from Tumileru. Before building the houses, the eldest of the settlers, Kopal Kanaya, killed a chicken for the *konda devata,* the deities of the hills who have since been propitiated once a week and on other ceremonial occasions.

All co-operate in the work of building the houses and as a rule, though not necessarily, the village founder's house is erected first. When it is complete, the first fire is kindled in his hearth by friction of two bamboos; this rite is in many villages repeated once a year, when the *pujari,* who is generally a descendant of the village founder, clears out his hearth and rekindles the fire by means of a fire-saw (Fig. 77).

When building a new house, and even when rebuilding it in later years on the old site, Reddis put a little uncooked millet, usually *sama,* into the hole which is to take the central post, so that the house shall

stand firm. In Siramkota, a village in the Northern Hills, Andel Lingaya, who had emigrated from his home-village some years previously, told me that when he built his new house and had placed the *sama* on some wild banana leaves in the hole, he saluted it touching first his forehead and then the edge of the hole with folded hands but without thinking of any particular god. Some men, he added, killed a chicken and let the blood drip on to the *sama*, and a rich man might even kill a goat.

The completion of a house is followed by a small house-warming party when the householder entertains those who helped him with the construction; before the meal is served he offers a little of the food to the Departed of his family.

The ceremonies accompanying house-building vary considerably in different localities, but the placing of *sama* under the central post seems to be a universal custom in the Godavari Region above the gorge and in the Northern Hills. In Teliberu, a village on the left bank of the Godavari, where Telugu merchants live side by side with Reddis, the *pujari*, whose house bore many signs of alien influence, told me that it is the women who erect the centre post; as they set it up, they break a coconut against the post, saying: "Oh mother, protect us."

*Houses.*

Whether a Reddi house stands isolated in the jungle or fence to fence with others in a street of a Godavari village, it is built according to the same structural pattern (Figs. 24, 25). The plan is square and the earthen floor is well raised above the ground. Most important is the forked centre post (*nidram*), for on it rests the whole structure of the pyramidal roof, the spliced bamboo rafters radiating on all sides, and the thatch of grass or palmyra leaves. The centre post is generally about twenty feet high and on its fork is balanced a short ridge pole (*arvi*) about 25 inches long with slightly hooked ends; over this the corner rafters are hitched. The other house-posts—four or six according to the size of the house—are about six feet high, and are set back about four feet from the edge of the floor; none of the posts are fashioned, and in many cases they are not even stripped of bark, but the natural forks are enlarged, being squarely cut to carry two heavy cross-beams and the ceiling of horizontally laid bamboos which serves also as the floor of the attic.

The floor-space is divided between two main parts, an inner room (*gadi*), where the women cook and husband and wife sleep in bad weather and a veranda (*arugu*), which is used as the general living room. This veranda may be left open but it is often closed in by wattle-screens, which are set up against the edge of the raised floor and reach to the eaves.

The inner room is enclosed by wattle-walls and has only one entrance; the door is sometimes of solid wood hung in a rough frame and swinging on peg and socket, but more often of wattle with a fibre lashing hinge. It is generally a dark, poky little place with a floor space of seldom more than 8 by 8 feet, made even darker when the wattle-screens are plastered with mud on the inside. There is no outlet by which the smoke may escape and what does not filter through the thatch or curl out of the door settles and covers everything with a thick coating of soot. However, the room is generally tidy and the floor is kept tolerably clean by frequent plasterings with mud or cow-dung. There is little furniture. The hearth (*poi*), generally consisting of three stones, stands in a corner or to one side against the wall. The more Hinduized Reddi builds a horse-shoe-shaped, raised mud-hearth with openings for one or two cooking pots. Sometimes there is a cot, tipped up against the wall during the day, and generally a small wattle-shelf suspended from the ceiling over the hearth on which leaf packets of garlic, spices or chillies, salt and garden seeds are kept. Occasionally a similar shelf hangs on one of the walls, and a bamboo suspended from the ceiling serves as a clothes-rail. On the floor stand a number of pots of various kinds: large pots for storing water (*nilla kunda*) each taking about 2 gallons, smaller pots (*atko*) used for fetching water and small cooking pots (*loti*). There will be several winnowing fans (*chata*), small baskets (*butta*) with newly gathered food, a grass-broom (*simpru*), bamboo measuring vessels (*sol*) and a small stack of wood for the day's use. But the great majority of household goods, oblong covered baskets (*pette*) for storing clothes, small square baskets on strings (*ginjal butta*) used for collecting wild plants and storing current stores of grain, dal or beans, gourd bottles (*burra,* sometimes called *dippa*) and dance rattles (*gilla kailu*) are suspended from the ceiling where they are safe from the ravages of white ants.

The veranda often surrounds the inner room, which is then situated in the middle of the house, but equally often the veranda is L-shaped and runs along two sides of the inner room (Fig. B) and is used as a general living and sleeping room. There the Reddi plaits his baskets and mats, makes his fishing nets and gossips in the evening over a smouldering fire; there the baby sleeps in its basket cradle (*wiyal*) or sari-hammock; the children play during the heat of the day, and the women pound grain or sago pith, grind and sift flour and often even cook on an improvised hearth; there too the family usually takes its meal. At one end there may be a stack of firewood and there are mats to sit on (*chapa*), perhaps a small wooden stool (*pita*), a wooden trough (*toti*) made from a hollowed log and used for pounding sago pith, a circular stone mill (*isher tirgula*) and a large flat stone with a water-worn pebble for grinding spices (*nurkuna rai*). There may be a wooden pounding table, but many women pound their grain in holes

sunk in the floor and these are generally in the middle of the veranda. Agricultural implements, axes (*godali*), hatchets (*kati*), digging-sticks (*tan karra*) and collecting baskets in daily use lie on the floor or are propped up against the wall, while in the corner stand one or two pestles, generally metal-tipped, winnowing fans and brooms. But here again the favourite repository is the roof, and wedged under rafters, stuck in the thatch, or suspended by strings you will find gourd-bottles for carrying gruel to the fields or fetching liquor, wooden ladles, drums, bows, arrows, one or two spare cock feathers, bill-hooks, small curved knives of various sizes, spare slivers of bamboo for sewing leaf plates, bamboo baskets of several types, wooden combs and an occasional rain hat; in the dry season there may be a bundle of dried sago pith.

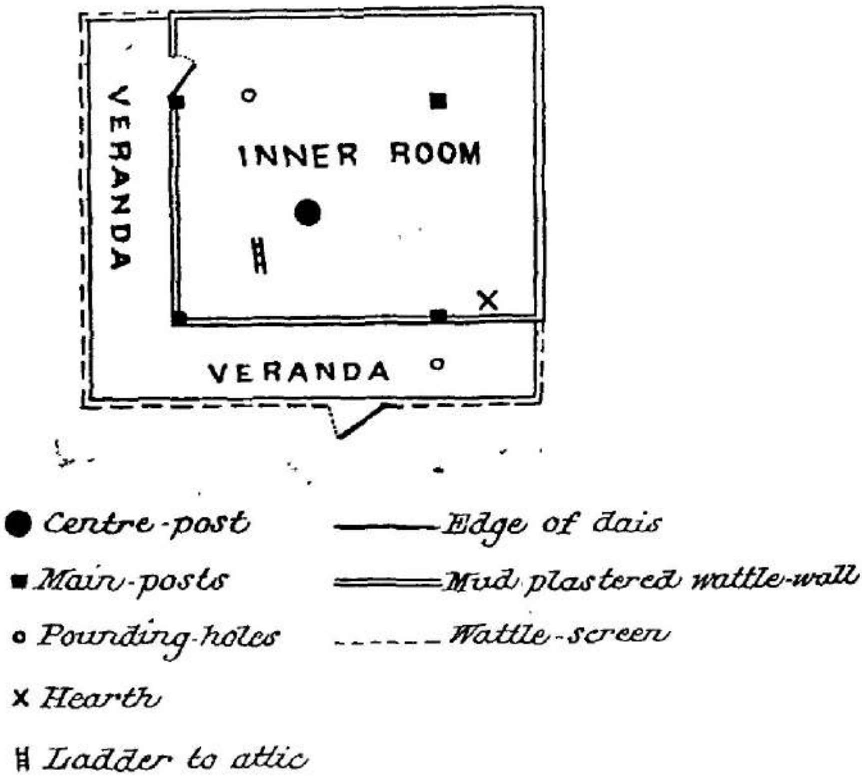



FIG. B. Plan of Pogal Ramaya's House in Kutturvada.

The attic (*atku*) is the general store-room. It comprises most of the space under the roof and is approached from the inner room by a twigged bamboo ladder (*tapa*). Here we find baskets which after the harvest contain grain or pulses and are often covered with a layer of ash to keep off rats and insects, leaf parcels with seed grain or dried

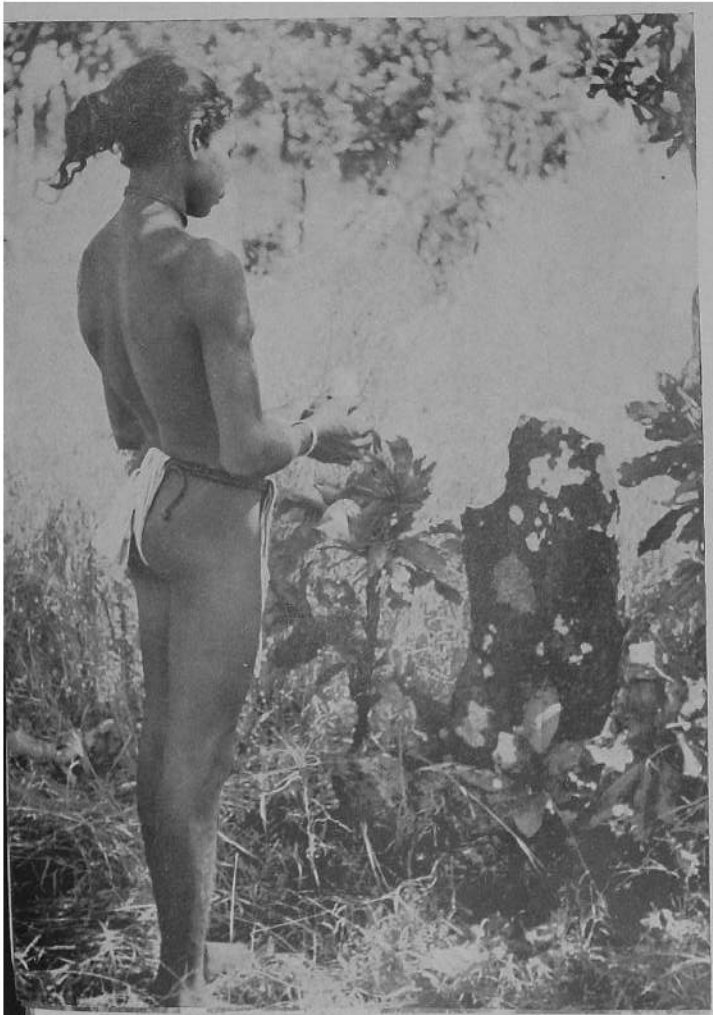


FIG. 74. Pogal Ramaya offers a coco-nut at the sacred stones on Papi Konda.

FIG. 75. Shrine of Singaramma at Kutturvada.

FIG. 76. Woman splicing bamboos for basket-making.

FIG. 77. Fire-making.

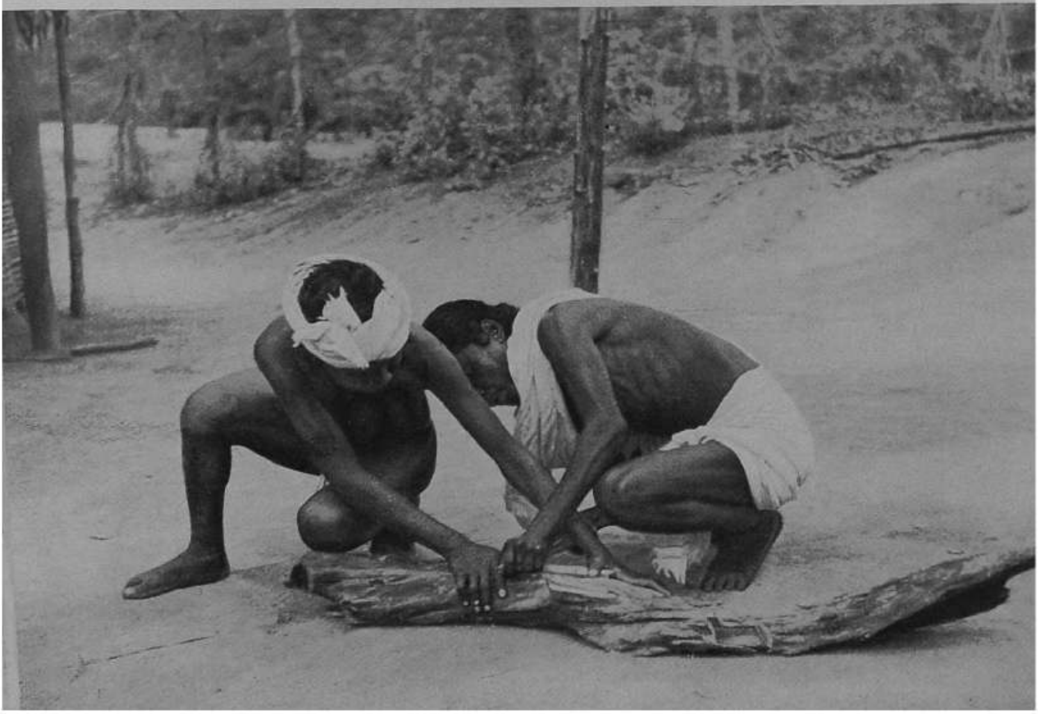
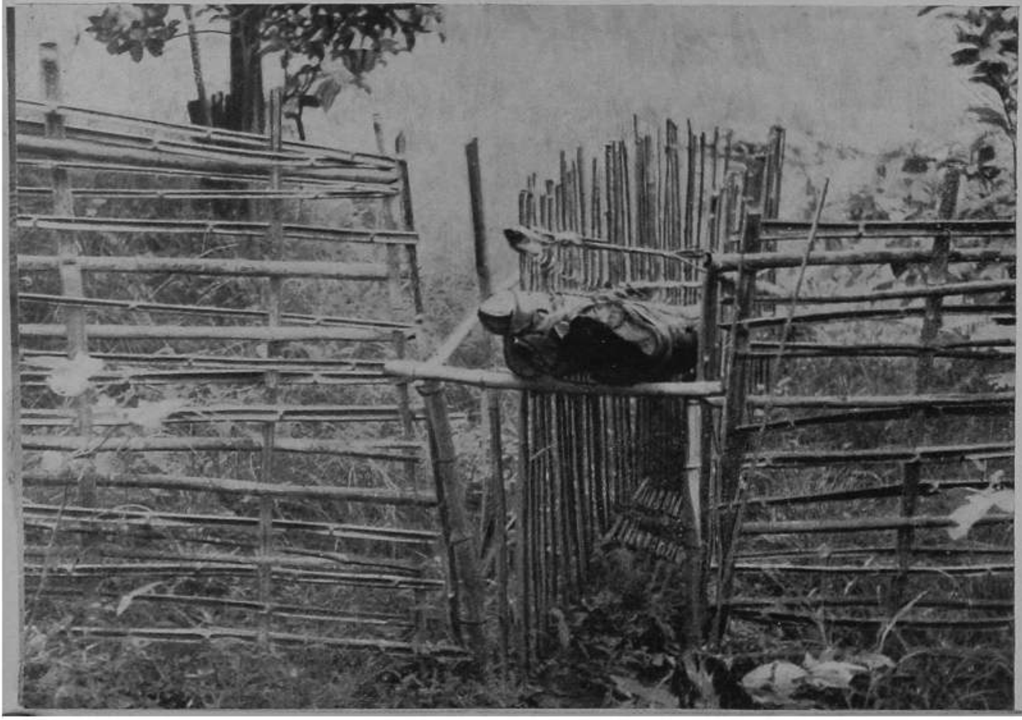


FIG. 24. A house in Kakishnur.

FIG. 25. Houses in Rampa-Chodavaram.

FIG. 26. A pigsty in Kakishnur.

FIG. 27. A trap for wild pig set into the fence of a *podu* field.



tobacco leaves and, if there has been a good season, a store of mango stones and tamarind.

The assortment of household goods varies from house to house and from village to village. The Reddis of Gogulapudi, for instance, do not possess the wooden troughs and the specially heavy pounders for the preparation of sago-pith, nor do they own fishing nets, both articles of great importance in other villages. But otherwise there is little variety in the material culture, and it happened more than once that I searched all the houses of a village without finding anything new.

Similarly there are slight variations in the design of the houses; for though the main features of construction are more or less constant, there are others which are subject to individual needs and inclination as well as to the materials locally available. Thus in the high hills to the north, where bamboo is scarce and there is plenty of timber, the houses are built in a distinct style; the Reddis of this region wall in their verandas with stockading, with logs horizontally laid, or rough hewn planks of caryota palm, placed edge to edge and pinned between two rows of stakes (Fig. 23). The walls of the inner room are, however generally of wattle, frequently smeared on both sides with mud, though here and there mud-smeared stockading is used also in the interior of the houses.

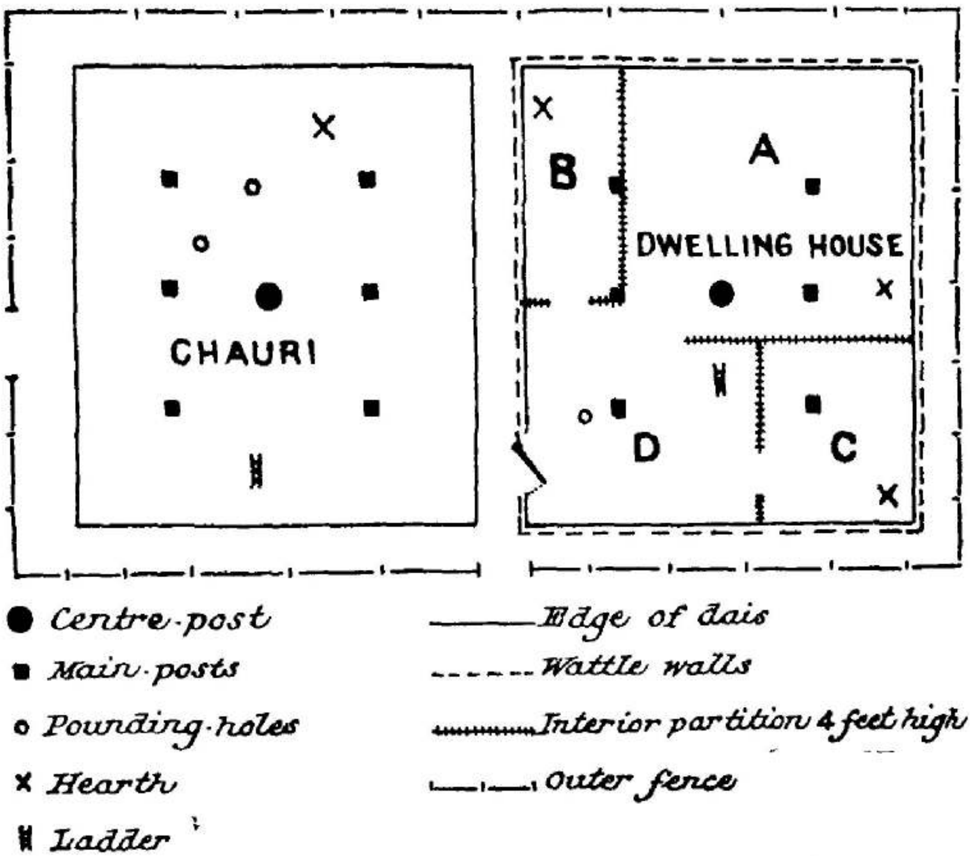
Some Reddis build a sun-shelter in front of their houses: four or six posts roofed with cross-poles, up which gourds, beans and yams climb. Others erect a *chauri*,[1] a shed built like a dwelling house but without walls and partitions. Generally the *chauri* contains a hearth, one or two pounding holes and if the house to which it is attached has no veranda, the majority of the household goods are kept there. It is a very convenient building which not only the family but also other villagers use as a place of assembly and gossip and where visitors sleep if they stay overnight.

If a man has more than one wife or several families live under one roof, each woman has her own corner of the house partitioned off by a wattle-screen, where she keeps her own household goods, has her own hearth and cooks for her own family. The front entrance of the house generally gives on to the veranda or on to a common entrance hall. When young couples live in their parents' house the mother often continues to cook for the whole family. A young wife sometimes prepares her husband's food on the common hearth; but when she has children of her own a portion of the inner room may be screened off for her own use.

The ground plan of Golla Lachmaya's house in Gogulapudi illustrates this rather more complex type of dwelling (Fig. C). Golla Lachmaya has three wives, each of whom has a room of her own. There is

1. *Chauri* is the Urdu term for rest-shed. There is no indication that these *chauris* have ever functioned as men's dormitories.

only one entrance door to the dwelling house, leading into a small common hall from which all the other compartments may be entered. The largest is occupied by Lachmaya's eldest wife and the smaller compartments by his second and third wives. There is no veranda, but there is a *chauri* next to the house, the eaves of the two buildings almost touching, and this the household use as a common living room. The whole establishment is surrounded by a fence which has gates both in front and at the back.




A.B.C. Rooms of First, Second and Third Wife; D...... Hall.

FIG. C. Plan of Golla Lachmaya's House in Gogulapudi.

The houses in the permanent villages on the Godavari and in the low valleys of the Rampa Country are constructed according to the same general principles as those of the hills. Yet their outward appearance is sometimes considerably different. The slightly raised floor of the hill dwellings has developed into a mud dais, usually about two feet high, and in the gorge area, where the rocky and sloping ground affords little level space, the dais is built up with large stones and con-

solidated with mud. The veranda, which in the hills is generally screened in, is often left open and the wattle-screens are set up at some distance from the house, so that the house stands in a small enclosure or courtyard. The explanation for this difference in taste is fairly evident: in the hills the houses are exposed to the full force of violent rain storms and the nights are cool throughout the year, and in the depth of the forest there is always the danger from wild animals; but in the oppressive heat of the low valleys open verandas are more pleasant and wild animals are not likely to enter a large village with houses standing in narrow streets. Here we find a noticeable tendency to enlarge the veranda at the expense of the inner room. In many houses it occupies the greater part of the floor space and the inner room has shrunk proportionately. Compared with the veranda, where nine-tenths of the domestic activities take place, this room, used only for cooking and sleeping in very bad weather, has here become so unimportant that a few men dispense with it altogether and build their houses without walling-off a space in the interior. Such houses consist, so to say, solely of verandas; the only wall runs across the middle of the dais and serves as little more than a wind-screen, on either side of which the owners sleep, cook and work, thus living continuously in the open and in the public eye. These curious roomless houses are in no way associated with inferior social or economic status but are solely due to the inclination of the householder. The *patel* of Kakishnur, a comparatively wealthy young man, lives with his mother, his brothers and sisters and newly married wife in such a house, which stands in the *pedda dare* of the middle settlement of Kakishnur and is not even surrounded by a wattle enclosure.

This encroachment of the veranda on the space of the inner room is well demonstrated by the house of Valla Bhimaya of Kakishnur. (Fig. D.). The house stands at one corner of the *pedda dare* of the upper settlement and overlooks the open slope outside the village. There is a small courtyard enclosed by a wattle fence and the main entrance, outside which Bhimaya tethers his cattle at night, gives on to the open slope and can be closed by a wattle-door; there is another gate leading from Valla Bhimaya's courtyard into that of his brother, but there is no entrance on the side of the *pedda dare*. The dais of the house is 2 feet high and the wattle-walls of the inner room are smeared with mud; the floor is plastered with cow-dung. As will be seen from the plan the veranda is particularly large, but otherwise the house is fairly typical of a house in this locality.

In the houses of the Godavari valley and the Rampa country we find a somewhat greater variety of household-goods than in those of the hills, and a larger number of articles not produced by the Reddis themselves. Brass pots have partly replaced the common earthen type, and there are drinking vessels and flat dishes of brass or cheap white

metal. Fishing tackle, hoop-shaped fishing nets, small funnel-necked fishing baskets, rods with their lines and hooks, and occasionally a pair of oars hang from the rafters of the roof, and there are more baskets for storing spare clothes and food. Sometimes a plough may be seen leaning against a wall, and a few men possess muzzle-loaders, while bows and arrows are growing rarer year by year. The general assortment of baskets, gourd bottles, winnowing fans, digging-sticks and minor articles such as spoons and ladles, is much the same as in the hills.

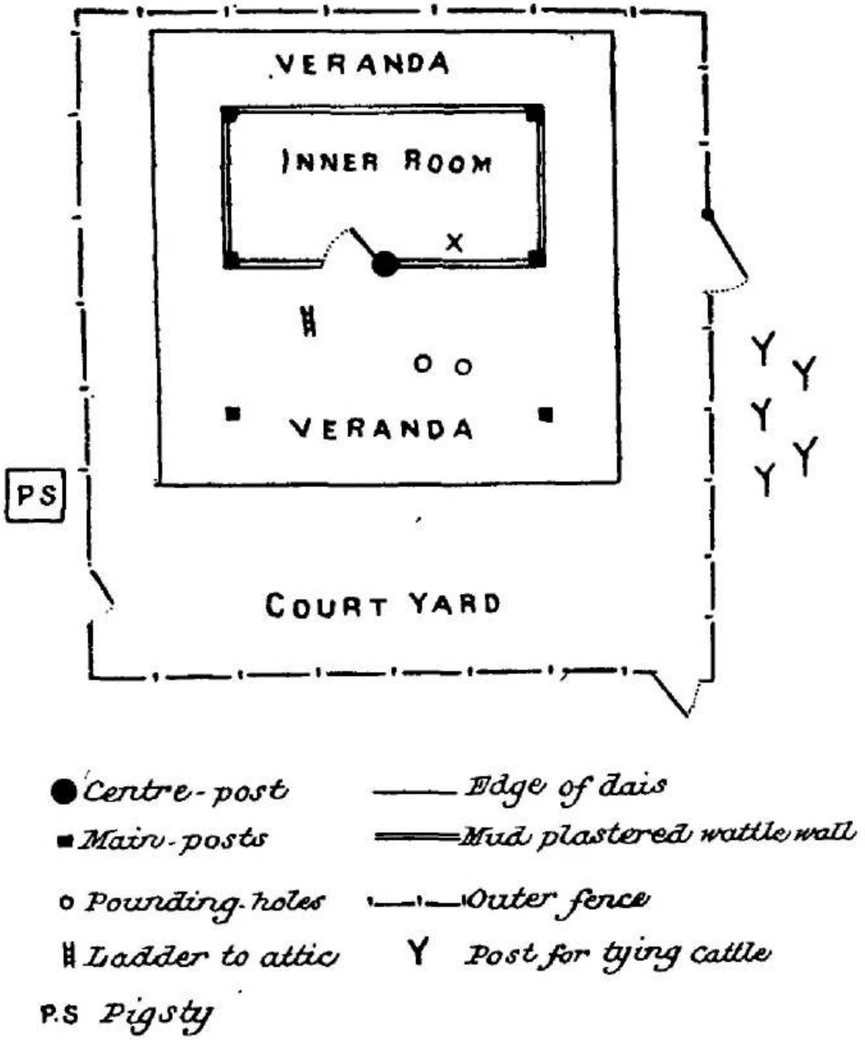



FIG. D. Plan of House of Valla Bimaya of Kakishnur.

In settlements with mixed populations the houses of Reddis reflect the impact of this contact. The Reddis of the *muttadar* villages of the

Rampa Country, where they live side by side with Malas and are in constant touch with Hindu cultivators and merchants, build their houses with firm mud walls, and verandas that run along the whole length of the front of the house. The dais is high, and broken by two or three steps cut in the mud, which lead up to a wooden door within a solid wooden frame. These doors are often two-leaved, battened with slats; the door posts and lintels are sometimes carved in simple geometrical patterns, while the red mud walls of the veranda are often painted in

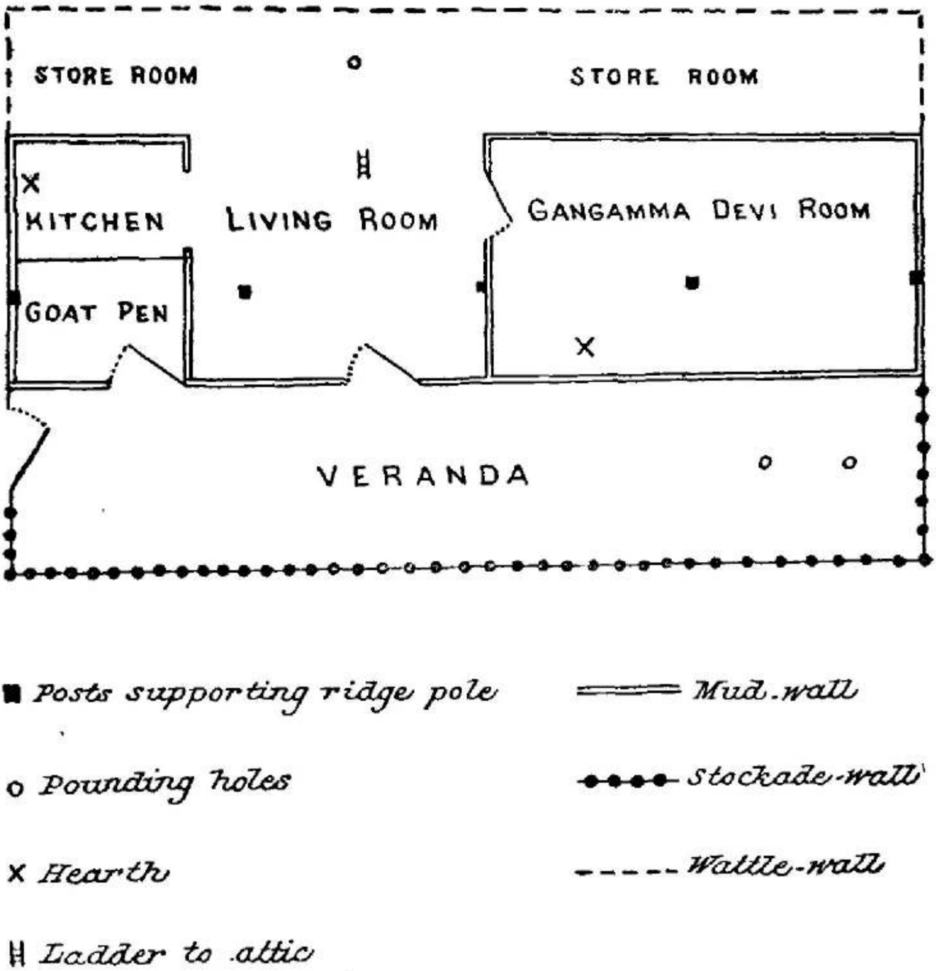



FIG. E. Plan of House of Munsif of Kanivada.

black and white patterns. The interior is divided into a small hall with rooms to either side. Yet even in this area many houses other than those of *muttadar* and *munsif* contain only one room. Fig. E. is the

ground plan of the house belonging to Palal Lingareddi, who is not only *munsif* but also *pujari* of Kanivada. He is a fairly rich man and one of the few Reddis who work irrigated rice-fields. His house is built on the side of a hill in the main settlement of Kanivada. It has a dais about 3 feet high, and the long veranda in front of the house is enclosed by stockading. The house-walls are of wattle, plastered with mud on both sides, and on the veranda side are ornamented with white tracery. The door leading from the wide veranda into the house is made of two leaves of planking, and the slats that batten them together are decorated with conventional geometrical carvings. The interior of the house is divided into five 'rooms': the *arwa,* a large square living room, *lobta illu* where the Gangamma Devi pot[1] and the brass vessels used in the preparation of the food for feasts are housed and which is always kept locked; and three other compartments all called *pancha* where household-goods and goats are kept. The attic (*atku*) extends over the whole building; the ladder leading up to a square trap stands in the living room. Despite the *munsif's* social position and his comparative wealth, his fine house contained little that we have not described already, except a small wooden table with one drawer, a small oil lamp hanging on the wall of the inner room, and the Gangamma Devi pot in the *lobta illu,* still festooned with withered garlands from the festival that had taken place several weeks previously.

In those villages on the Godavari below the gorges where merchants and Telugu cultivators have settled among the aboriginals, here and there a Reddi of means builds his house in lowland style, *i.e.,* oblong in plan, with a long veranda and several rooms. But such houses are rare and the square, one-room building is still the predominant house-form. It is in these contact-areas that some houses contain a walled-off space set apart for the worship of the clan-god, but more often only a corner with a semi-circular mud-platform about six inches high, is set apart as an 'altar' for offerings.

Thus the various types of Reddi houses appear to result from the interplay of several forces: the requirements of the environment, the cultural tradition of the Reddis themselves, and the influence of their neighbours. The cooler climate of the high hills to the north coupled with an ample supply of timber has led to the more solid stockading walled houses, just as the excessive heat of the Godavari valley led to buildings where the size of the inner room is sacrificed for the sake of ampler veranda space. The Reddi's cultural tradition, on the other hand, seems to be responsible for the square plan and the type of roof construction; for other shapes would suit the climate and milieu equally, and a little further north we find the Dires and Bondo Porajas building their houses with two main posts and a full length ridge pole.

1. Cf. pp. 189, 190.

Finally the occasional adoption of the lowland type of house with its decorated door-posts and painted walls is clearly due to the recent influx of traders and Telugu cultivators.

## CHAPTER V

# FOOD-GATHERING

ALTHOUGH the Reddis are an agricultural people their dependence on nature's wild produce is still very great, and food-gathering occupies a prominent place in their economy. Except in those areas, where the influence of more advanced populations has led to a gradual emancipation from older economic methods, there are many days and many weeks when the Reddis rely for food on collecting the edible fruits and plants of the forest. Thus the means by which the more primitive tribes of hunters and food-collectors, such as the Chenchus, subsist throughout the year, also serve the Reddis as a valuable source of income both alternative and supplementary to their production of food through cultivation. As far as the gathering of wild vegetable produce is concerned, little progress in the efficiency of method is perceptible, and the main implement of the Reddi woman, like that of her Chenchu sister, is the digging-stick. It is only in hunting and fishing, occupations which undoubtedly offer a wider scope for man's ingenuity, that the Reddis employ methods superior to those of the Chenchus and other primitive jungle tribes, notably concerted action in the chase and the use of mechanical devices for trapping game.

### *Collection of Vegetable Produce*

Of all the wild plants that contribute to the Reddi's diet, the *Caryota urens,* a sago-like palm, locally known as *jirigu chettu* is certainly the most important. It occurs erratically throughout the Reddi country, favouring the higher rather than the lower slopes, and supplies the Reddi with his favourite palm-wine. The pith of the trunk, moreover, provides him with a substantial food, which helps to bridge the gap between his grain harvests. Where there are only a few trees, they are carefully preserved for the sake of their wine, but in other areas the pith is consumed in great quantities, and serves as a reliable insurance against hunger in times of food scarcity. The amount of pith contained in a full-grown caryota palm—and only full grown trees are felled—far exceeds that which a single family can consume over a reasonable period, and consequently several men, generally all the men of a hill-settlement co-operate in the work of felling and divide up the trunk into logs of a size convenient to carry to the village. A log about one yard long and fifteen inches in diameter will nourish a family with little supplementary food for about a week, but generally such a diet is eked out with

roots, mango kernels or other jungle produce and sometimes a handful of grain. The logs are stripped of bark, and the pith (*tata modu*), a porous substance which flakes easily into long tongues, is spread out to dry either in the sun or on flat wattle shelves suspended from the roof of the house. After three or four days when the pith has thoroughly dried, the women pound it in oblong wooden troughs specially hollowed from logs for the purpose (Fig 30). This is a long and irksome task and in many villages the dull booming of pestles, which can be heard long before sunrise, continues through half the morning. By pounding the starchy particles are separated from the fibrous parts of the pith and the pinkish flour that results is strained first through a bamboo sieve and then through a cloth; it is used to make unleavened bread or more often to prepare a thin gruel which is sometimes flavoured with salt and chillies or thickened with pulse or millet flour.

The sap of the caryota palm can only be drawn during the hot weather and the first part of the rains, and the supply is further restricted by a limited period of inflorescence. Trees growing within easy reach of a village are considered private property; and it seems that property rights are secured and exercised by the man who first ladders and taps a tree.

The Reddis climb the palm-trees by laddering the bole from root to flower with stout twigged bamboo culms strapped securely one on top of the other with broad rattan bands (Fig. 28). Once a tree has thus been made accessible it may only be tapped by the man in possession, who, as the hot weather approaches, often climbs up amongst the great feathery leaves in search of the first bud; anxiously he watches over its gradual development and when the spadix curves earthwards, he cuts off the head and inserts the stem in a gourd vessel or pot, which is suspended in such a way that it catches the oozing sap. The yield, at first insignificant, increases until two or three pints of juice are found in the vessel both morning and evening. Each day the end of the spathe is thinly pared, and when it runs dry the Reddi must wait for his liquor until the development of a new bud.

The fresh juice has a pleasant and sweet taste, but within a few hours it ferments and becomes pungent and strongly intoxicant. Women sometimes boil palm-wine to reduce its alcoholic content and they say that it is very nourishing. Indeed the strong physique and stoutness of some hill people is popularly attributed to the plenty of caryota palms on their village land. At the height of the palm-wine season, which coincides with a time when there is little work on the fields, Reddis with caryota palms give little thought to serious activities. A man of Uparpatla told us that in the hot season he goes to his tree each morning and drinks off the wine he finds in the pot and then with a happy feeling lies down under the tree and sleeps. In the afternoon he wakes, climbs once more into the crown and takes down a second

FIG. 28. Climbing a *Caryota urens* to draw palm-wine.

FIG. 29. Digging for roots.

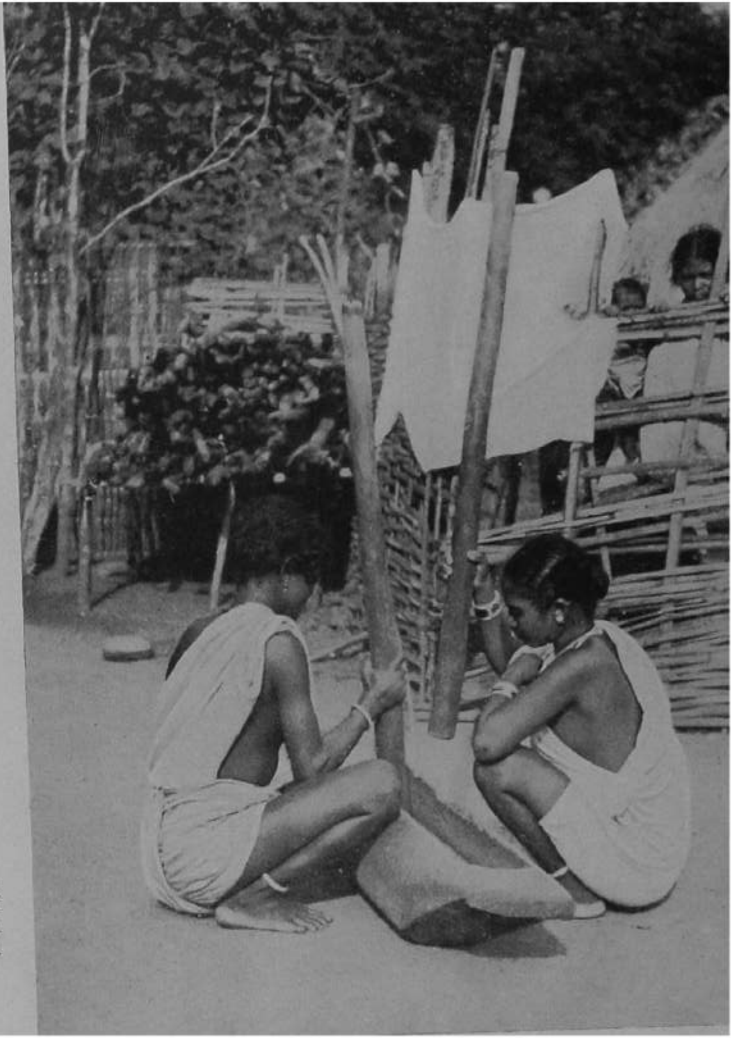


FIG. 30. Pounding the pith of *Caryota urens* in a wooden trough.

pot of wine. He is thirsty and he drinks again, but some he takes back to his house to share with his wife and his friends. This is the Reddis' ideal of a perfect day and while the season lasts little is seen of the men in the village.

Every Reddi will tell you that if he has sufficient caryota wine he needs little else to eat. He prefers caryota wine to palmyra wine, but on no account must the two kinds be mixed: "Is not the palmyra the daughter-in-law of the caryota? Just as mother and daughter-in-law quarrel, so will the juices of these two trees fight in the stomach."

At the beginning of the season the men of a village perform a ceremony at the foot of one of their caryota palms; they pray to the *konda sati,* hill deities, who are believed to have first planted and nurtured the caryota palm, that success should attend the drawing and that the wine should flow like a great stream, plentifully and unceasingly.[1]

In the villages on the Godavari banks and in the low valleys of the Rampa country the Reddis also take the toddy of *Borassus flabellifer,* the palmyra palm; yet toddy is not a 'national' drink in the same sense as caryota wine. Reddis are essentially hill people, and it is only the caryota palm which flourishes on mountain slopes, while the palmyra palm grows in the valleys. Though the Reddis settling in these areas have taken to its use, they have not acquired the Koya and Gaonvadu technique of climbing the trunk with fettered legs and waist strap, but ascend the palmyra palm in the same way as the caryota palm. Like other folks of the Telugu country they eat the fruits of the palmyra, plucking them and storing them in buried heaps till maturity.

Mango and tamarind trees are only of slightly less economic importance to the Reddi than the caryota palm. While tamarind trees are rarely found wild in the forest, the majority having been planted near human habitations, the mango tree is evidently indigenous in the Reddis' habitat and occurs in great numbers throughout the hills and valleys wherever ample rainfall or subsoil water favours its growth. The fact that the ceremonial first eating of the mangoes is accompanied by one of the greatest annual feasts seems to indicate an age-old association of the mango tree with Reddi culture.

In most parts of the Reddis' country this ceremony, known as the Mamidi Panduga,[2] takes place in March or early in April when the mangoes are still green and hard; and from this time the Reddis are free to eat the fruit, which forms an important part of their diet during the next months. Early in the morning women and children leave their houses hoping to forestall the birds, monkeys, porcupines, wild pigs and deers which all come to browse on the windfalls. In the early part of the season the Reddis too only collect windfalls, which are very numerous, and they may be seen returning to their

1. Cf. p. 198.
2. Cf. p. 180.

houses with enormous quantities of green fruit in their baskets. Towards the end of the season, however, when the mangoes ripen, they hook them down with a twig tied at an angle to the end of a long bamboo and sometimes boys and girls climb the trees and shake the branches or beat down the fruit with sticks. Ripe mangoes are eaten raw; unripe, they are peeled, sliced and used in curries. The stones are collected, dried and carefully stored, for when pounded the kernels yield a flour which is used in the same manner as sago-pith for making unleavened bread and gruel. In Joremamulu, a small hill-settlement on the Hyderabad-Madras boundary, the Reddis told me that they live for many months of the year on pounded mango kernels, and when I commiserated with them over the absence of blossoms which foreshadowed a complete failure of that year's crop, they replied quite unmoved that they had a sufficient store of mango-stones to last them for two years.

Though sometimes planted in the vicinity of villages and when young protected by wattle-screens, mango trees are never considered private property. In this respect they differ from jack-fruit trees (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) which, when growing in or near villages, may be owned and inherited by individuals who tend them carefully, but are nevertheless expected to share the fruits with the other members of the community. The sickly smelling pulp of the jack-fruit is eaten both raw and cooked in gruel or curries, and the seeds are roasted.

Tamarind fruits are much valued for flavouring other varieties of food; fresh tamarinds ripening in December and January are peeled, sliced and boiled in gruel or curries, but those not intended for immediate consumption are peeled, seeded and pressed into baskets to be preserved throughout the year. And at the time when the yellow blossoms cover the ground, the young, tender leaves are boiled and eaten together with pulse, grain gruel or curry.

Other wild trees whose fruits play a role in Reddi diet are: *Buchanania latifolia, Zizyphus Jujuba, Zizyphus Oenoplia, Semecarpus Anarcardium, Diospyros Melanoxylon, Mimusops hexandra and Hardwickia binnata,* which mainly ripen during the hot season and the early part of the rains. Custard apples (*Anona squamosa*) and various species of *ficus* occur near some of the valley villages. The corollæ of *Bassia latifolia,* the mahua tree, which are much sought after both by Chenchu and Gond, do not seem equally popular among the Reddis; yet when available they are collected and eaten boiled. I found no indication that Reddis were ever in the habit of distilling mahua liquor; but they purchase it in liquor shops when they have the means.

The bearing seasons of the wild fruit trees are, especially to the hill-dwellers, most welcome; yet, with the exception of mangoes, wild fruit never forms more than an accessory article of diet. Edible roots and tubers, such as wild taro, occupy a very different position; the

women of the hill-settlements go often root-digging (Fig. 29) and there are many months when they rely mainly on tubers for feeding their families. Those most frequently eaten are *veli sheanda gadda, nalla sheanda gadda, vaimu gadda, nara dumpa* and *teana dumpa.* The first two varieties, which resemble small turnips, must be sliced and soaked in running water for twenty-four hours, and then boiled with frequent changes of water before they can be eaten; they are important because of their prolific growth in most types of forest and because they can be collected all the year round. *Vaimu gadda* and *nara dumpa* on the other hand can only be dug up at the end of the cold weather and the beginning of the rains and *teana dumpa* only when the monsoon is well advanced.

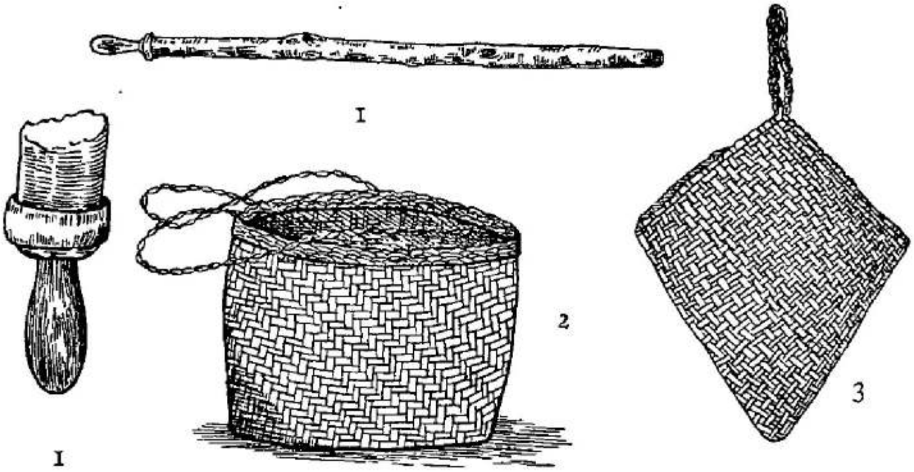



FIG. F. Food-gathering Implements.
1. Digging-stick; 2. Collecting-basket; 3. Honey-press.

During the heavy rains of the south-west monsoon edible herbs spring up all over the jungle and are eaten boiled both in gruel and curry. The most popular species, some of which are hardly inferior to garden spinach, are *pacha kurra, chenchu kurra, dogal kurra* and *vainti kurra.* At the same time the women cut large quantities of the new shoots of bamboos and, peeling off the outer skin, grate the tender stem with a small knife before cooking. The rains also bring forth a large crop of a gregarious, white, saucer-like fungus, which is roasted or boiled.

The extent to which the Reddis rely on jungle produce for their food-supply varies according to their general economic condition. Those living in the broad valleys, who have permanent fields and cattle for ploughing, are less dependent on the gathering of wild fruits and roots than dwellers of the hills; but even they, because of their indebtedness

to merchants which often forces them to forfeit the larger part of their crops, revert at times to a jungle diet. Forest labour for contractors does not free the Reddi entirely from the necessity of supplementing his food with tubers, herbs and wild fruits, for little bamboo felling is done during the rains and it is then that his supply of grain is at its lowest ebb.

### *Hunting*

Hunting is no longer a pursuit that all Reddis can follow wherever and whenever they please. Game-laws and forest-regulations have restricted the variety of animals that may be hunted, and within the boundaries of Hyderabad the Reddis are nominally not allowed to hunt at all. Actually they do hunt either with bows and arrows or in rare cases with muzzle-loaders, and in the last two years there has been little interference by the Forest authorities. But while we lived among the Reddis they hunted only surreptitiously and in fear of forest-guards; though fined when caught the men still clung to their ancient custom of the great hunt at the Bhumi Deva Pandugu.[1] In the East Godavari District they are free to hunt both outside and inside the reserved forests, as long as they do not encroach on such protected animals as the bison. Licences for muzzle-loaders are issued for an annual fee of As. 4., which is well within the means of Reddis. Yet the Reddis of the Godavari Region do not seem to spend very much time and energy on organized hunting, probably because whenever there is a lull in their agricultural activities they are fully occupied with forest labour. But the Reddis of the Northern Hills are keen hunters, and you will seldom meet a man outside his village, who does not carry a strung bow and a handful of arrows. Here game is plentiful, and touring in this region we walked into herds of spotted deer grazing in forest glades and often startled sambar and wild pig in the high grass.

When the men of a village organize a hunt, they divide into parties; sometimes the best shots take up a position on a pass between two hills, while the others drive the game up the slopes into their arrows, and sometimes the beat is so arranged that the game is driven along a slope. The Reddis of the Godavari villages on the other hand, drive the game between two lines of hunters down to the river, forcing their prey into the water.

One evening in Parantapalli, the stillness of the fading day was shattered by cries and shouts, and in a few moments every man and boy of the village armed with strung bow and arrows came running down the steep banks to the river. In midstream a sambar hind swam with the current, evidently trying to gain our shore. Two boats filled with men from Kondepudi, the village on the opposite bank, followed in hot pursuit, but the animal made good progress and might have escaped, if the men, women and children of Parantapalli, lining the

1. Cf. pp. 82, 191.

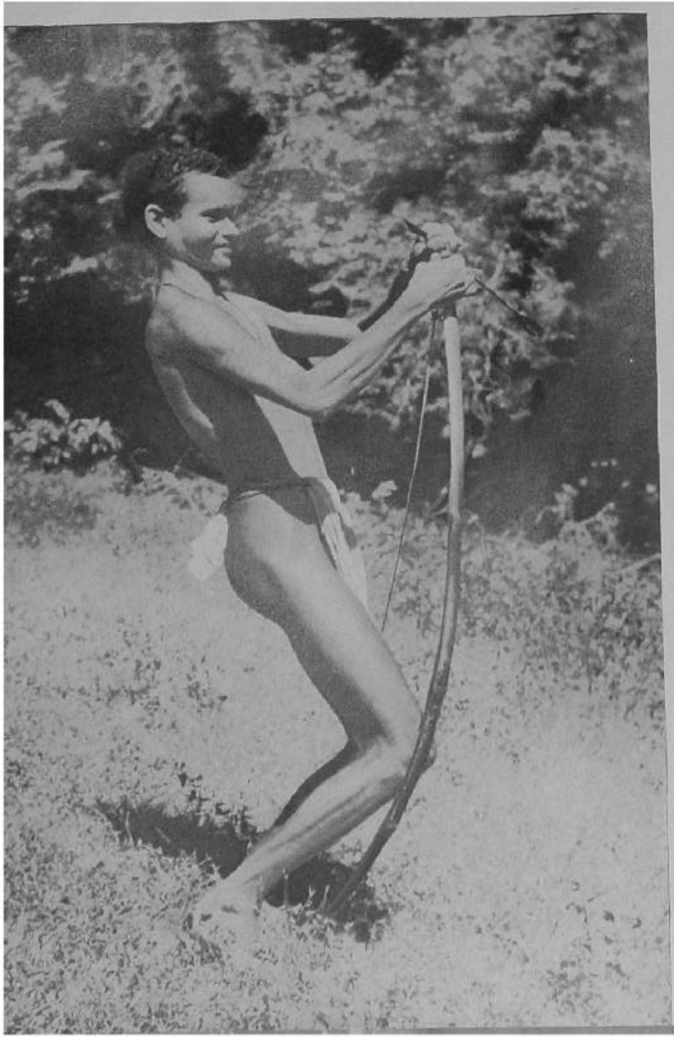


FIG. 31. Stringing the bow.

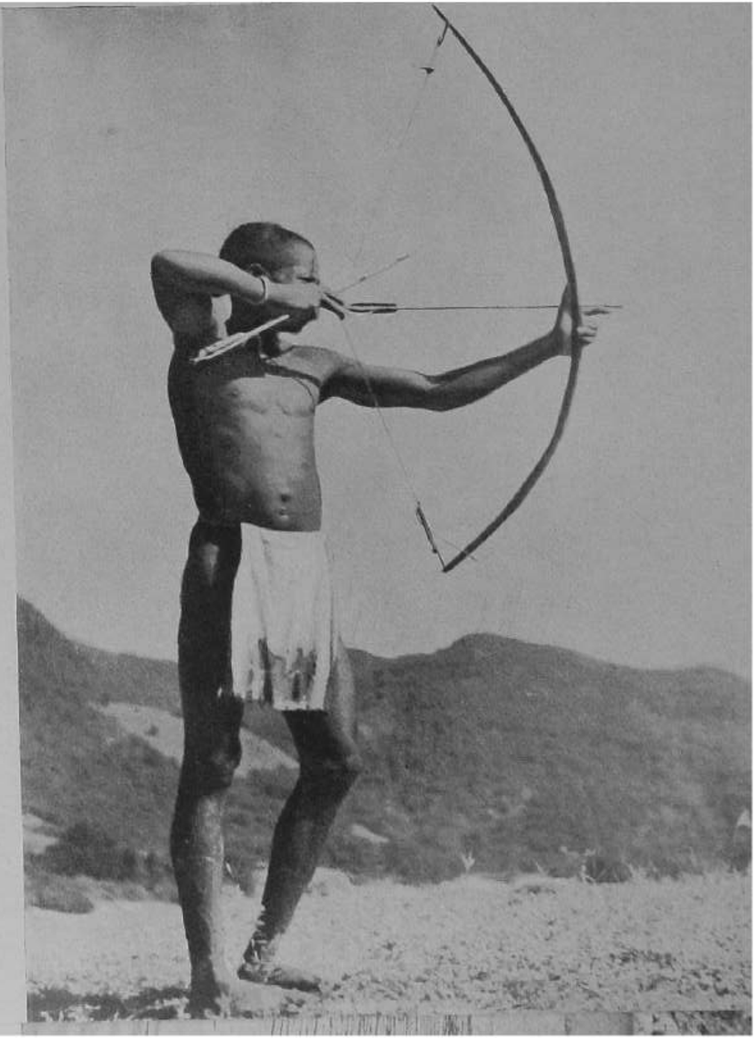


FIG. 32. Drawing the bow.

Fig. 33. Rowing from the bows of a dug-out.

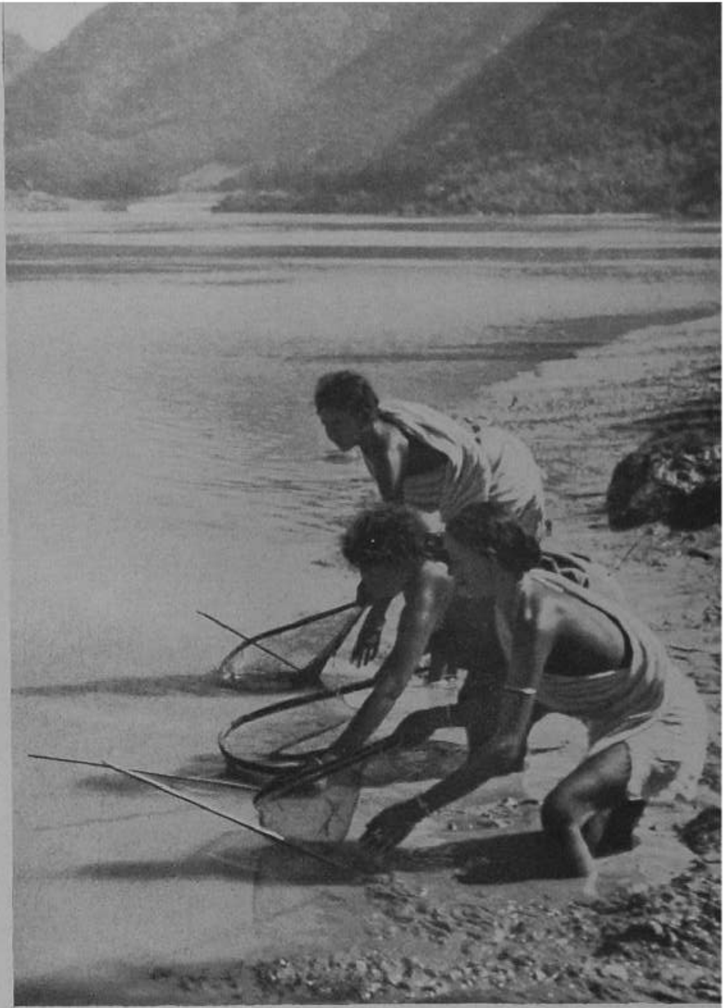


Fig. 34. Women fishing with hand-nets.

bank, had not menaced its landing; they shouted, brandished sticks and let fly badly aimed arrows whenever it attempted to leave the water. Soon a third dug-out manned with Parantapalli men sped down the near bank, the Kondepudi dug-outs began closing in and the three of them tried to corner the sambar; realizing its desperate plight it bleated piteously, making short but ineffectual dashes whenever it saw an open space. But each time it was turned by the hunters in the dug-outs, who again and again bent their bows until many arrows stuck in its shoulders and back. After some time the paddlers succeeded in manœuvring their dug-outs so that the now enfeebled animal was completely encircled; whenever they came within arm's length they clubbed it on the head with their broad-bladed paddles. It was a ghastly spectacle; but at last one of the Reddis threw a noose over the sambar's head and they dragged it half dead to the shore where they killed it by cutting its throat (Fig. 36). The Kondepudi men then took charge of the carcass and, tying it to the stern of one of their dug-outs, returned to their village, where the flesh was divided among all the households. Next day the men of Kondepudi sent a share of the meat to Parantapalli in recognition of their co-operation during the final stages.

Whenever Reddis bring down an animal all the men taking part in the hunt share the kill equally; only the man whose arrow first pierced the animal receives a slightly larger portion. The carcass is tied by the legs to poles, which are shouldered and carried to any convenient water. There a fire is made and after the hair has been singed off the head and the skin are immediately roasted and eaten. The rest of the meat is cut into pieces, wrapped in large leaves and carried home to the village, where it is distributed among all households; even those unrepresented among the hunters receive a share. Before setting out for a hunt Reddis usually say a short prayer for success, and many offer a small part of the kill to Katamaya, god of the chase, but this ceremony is not universal and its variations and different aspects will be discussed in Chapter X (p. 192).

Reddis armed with muzzle-loaders sometimes go out alone to stalk game; they are clever in tracking down a wounded animal, often following its spoor for many miles. If the animal crosses over into the territory of another village and is killed there, the owners of the land receive a portion of the meat, while the rest is taken away by the hunter.

Apart from muzzle-loaders, which are still comparatively rare, the Reddis' only weapons are bows and arrows, a description of which is given in Appendix I. In stringing the bow, pressure is exerted on the belly of the stave with the outer side of the right knee, the lower horn resting on the ground and the upper horn being pulled towards the body, so that the loop of the string can be slipped into the notches of the

stave (Fig. 31). In contrast to many other aboriginal tribes the Reddis often carry their bows strung. To shoot they hold the bow perpendicularly, grasping the stave in the left hand, the thumb at right angles; they place the arrow on the left of the stave and rest it on the outstretched forefinger to steady the flight. They use the so-called Mediterranean release, drawing the string by the three middle fingers, of the right hand, the arrow being held by the first and second.

Although the Reddis know how to set traps of certain types, they cannot be regarded as very expert trappers of game. Most of their traps are based on the principle of a weight dropping on the animal as soon as it touches the bait. Simple traps (*potra*) for catching rats and other small animals, whose flesh the Reddis relish, consist of a flat stone propped at an angle of about 45 degrees by a splinter of bamboo; this is connected with a bait-stick in such a way, that it is dislodged by the slightest touch. More elaborate fall-traps are used for catching porcupines and wild pigs. Two or three rough logs, weighted with stones, are supported obliquely between two walls of stockading enclosing the bait and the release-mechanism, which, when touched, causes the logs to fall and crush the animal entering the trap. If intended for porcupines such traps are erected under mango trees which the animals are known to frequent and are baited with mango kernels. Larger traps (*gude*) of the same kind are built into the fences of hill-fields; the stockade passage appears to the animal as an entrance into the field and the ripening crops beyond are sufficient bait to tempt wild pigs into the trap (Fig. 27).

A rat trap based on a different principle is illustrated in Fig. G. Here a stout bamboo is split in half to a length of about 12 inches and the two ends are wedged open by a combination of thin bamboo sticks; when a rat, attracted by the bait passes between the gaping ends, it dislocates the combination and the ends of the bamboo spring together squashing the victim. The power of the trap is sometimes increased by a stone suspended from the upper half of the split bamboo.

In Siramkota in the Northern Hills the Reddis told me that they knew how to make game pits, but that nowadays they seldom used this method fearing one of their own cows might fall victim.

The Reddis of the Godavari Region snare jungle fowl, partridges and other birds with a small running noose connected to a bent bamboo. As soon as the bird, attracted by grain scattered over the noose, treads on a release mechanism, it springs back and tightens the noose round the bird's legs.

In the choice of the wild animals whose meat they eat, Reddis are more discriminating than the Koyas or Bastar Gonds. They eat sambar, deer, wild pig, squirrel, all kinds of rats and mice and most birds except crow and kite; but they do not eat bison or wild buffalo and are revolted at the idea of eating monkeys. Bears are eaten by some Reddis, though

others assert that they will not touch bear meat. They eat neither frogs, snakes nor crocodiles, but are fond of the flesh of the Indian monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*). Land crabs are often caught by

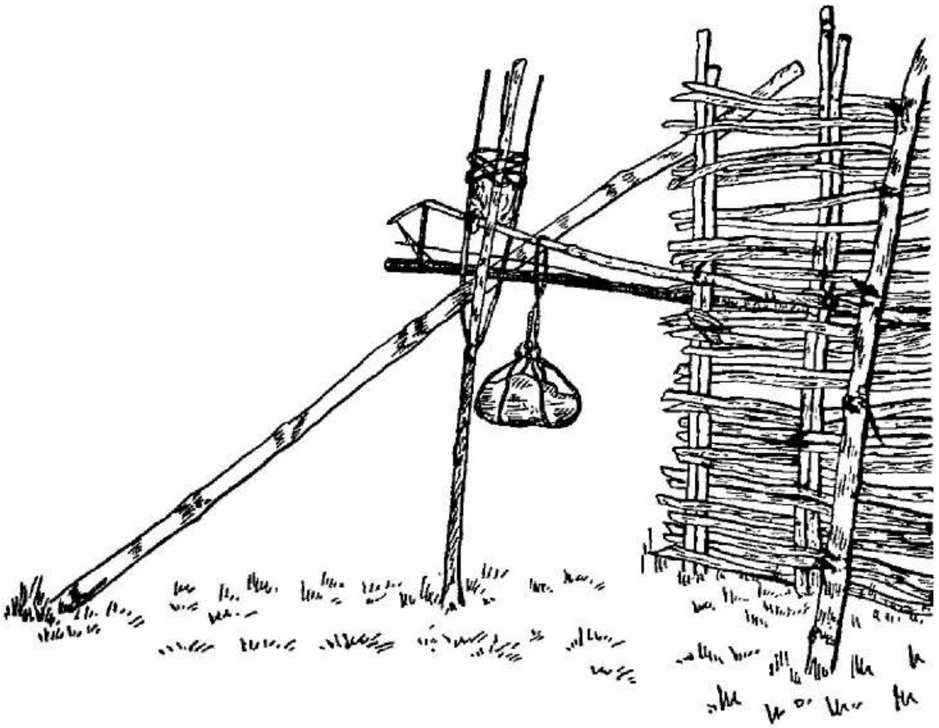


**FIG. G.** Rat-trap outside the fence of a house at Mautagudem.

women and children who seize them by their nippers as they crawl out of holes in damp weather; roasted or boiled these small crabs are considered a delicacy.

*Honey-taking*

The Reddis are fond of honey and eager to acquire it, but they do not show the same ingenuity and courage in its collection as the Chenchus or the jungle tribes of the south. Once, on the way to Kutturvada, I saw a great number of honey-combs on the face of a high cliff that would have fallen an easy prey to Chenchus, but the Reddis declared that they would not venture on such a precipice; and since they never use ropes in taking honey, their hesitation was perhaps understandable. If honey combs are discovered in trees, they smoke out the bees with bundles of smouldering leaves and carve off the comb from the branch. Sometimes the Reddis press out the honey using a soft, loosely woven basket (Fig F. 3), but generally the combs are boiled whole, wax and grubs being consumed with the honey.

## *Fishing*

The Reddis living on the banks of the Godavari spend a great deal of time in catching fish, but those of the hills never journey down to the large rivers such as Pamuleru or Godavari on fishing expeditions. It is only in the hot weather, when the flow of the mountain streams is slowed, that they fish by poisoning the pools with the bark of *Barringtonia acutangula*; they take a branch and dash it repeatedly against the stones on the edge of the stream so that fragments of the bark float into the water. Another method of poisoning fish is to scatter the pounded green seeds of *Casearia tomentosa* over the surface of the water. Reddis do not understand how to build weirs or dam up running water. No prayers comparable to those said before and after a hunt precede fishing nor are fish ever used as offerings.

Every village on the Godavari has its own fishing-grounds, extending along the shore of the village lands, where men lay their lines and neighbours do not encroach, but there exist no complicated fishing-rights. In the dry season fishermen of other castes bring their large sailing boats up from Rajahmundry, and fish wherever they please. They use big nets and sometimes engage the Reddis to help in the work by rewarding them with part of the catch.

But the Reddis themselves have no large nets but rely for their fishing mainly on line and hook, and on small hand-nets. In deep waters near rocky promontories or in small bays the Reddis squat among the shrubbery, which grows green as the cold weather advances and the river recedes, and fish with rod and line. Sometimes they fish alone, setting two or three stationary rods within arms' reach and angling with another, but often several men fish the same bay and then each angles with a single rod. The Reddi's rod is a long flexible bamboo stripped of leaves and twigs, and his line is made of bazaar yarn twined on a spindle. He uses a bent peacock-feather as a float and procures an iron hook of a single barbed type from plains people, baiting it with earthworms, small fish or a piece of fruit. He never weights his bait or uses a lure. I have heard of Reddis who shoot fish in shallow water with bow and arrow, but I have never seen it done.

Night lines are set at dusk, secured to convenient river bushes on a slanting bamboo pole set up on the bank, and are drawn in at dawn. These lines carry twenty to thirty strings each with its hook baited with worm or fish, but floats are never used on night lines.

In the cold and dry seasons when the river flows sluggishly and great tawny sand banks line the river and form small islands in mid-stream, both men and women, though chiefly the latter, fish with hand-nets in the quiet shallows (Fig. 34 and H). Wading into the river, they prop two small rods with lines not more than eighteen inches long

and hooks baited with earth-worms obliquely in the sand about two feet apart. And there they stand, knee deep in water, watching for a bite, ready to slip the hand-net under the hooks and with a quick movement draw the unwary fish or prawn to the surface, where they slip it into their funnel-necked baskets (Fig. H. 2). These hand-nets the Reddi manufactures himself. Yarn is purchased and twined on wooden spindles into string, suitable for half-inch mesh network, and with his fingers he nets a globular shaped fabric, which is then threaded on an oval bamboo frame.

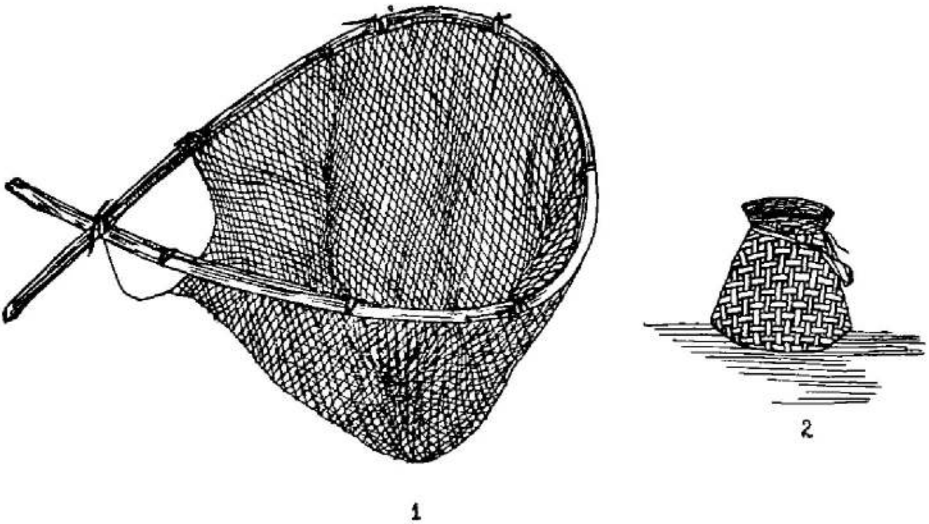



Fig. H. Hand-net (1) and fishing-basket (2).

Many Reddis also fish from dug-outs (*doni*) using these hand-nets to comb overgrown nooks and ledges in peaceful backwaters. From our tent in Parantapalli we often watched the men setting out on fishing excursions. With the first light of dawn, they hurried down the steep bank with nets, baskets and heavy paddles over their shoulders. Soon two or three dug-outs could be seen nosing their way out of the bay; each carries two men, one in the stern paddling leisurely now to the right now to the left, steering as well as propelling the dug-out, the other picking up the lines laid the evening before and putting the fish into a basket. Then they would try their luck with their hand-nets among the rocky islands and muddy waters of the near shore. Only when the business of fishing was over and the dug-out veered round making for home, did the man in the bow take up a second paddle, slip it into a fibre loop attached to a hole in the side of the boat, and row facing his companion in the stern (Fig. 33).

There were only three dug-outs in Parantapalli, one fairly large and two small ones, which the ten households of the village shared.

They were the common property of the village, and even those who had helped in their construction did not exercise any priority rights. Yet no friction seemed to arise over their use, nor was there ever a race for the boats in the early morning. Similar circumstances prevail in most of the villages of the Godavari, and though there are never more than four or five boats in even the largest villages, I was always assured that those available were quite sufficient for the needs of the community.

Reddi dug-outs, although often very small and of doubtful stability, are well suited for the purposes of fishing and traffic between villages (Fig. 35). They are easily propelled by one man and do not require any appreciable upkeep. The two kinds of trees used for their manufacture are the mango (*Mangifera indica*) and the silk cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*). Several men co-operate in felling the tree and hollowing out the trunk with iron adzes; fire is never used for such purposes. When the boat has been completed and launched, stout bamboo poles are lashed to each side to serve as rudimentary outriggers and these help to steady the craft. Many paddles are carved of one piece of wood, while others consist of a long handle and a rectangular blade fastened to the handle by two wooden pegs.

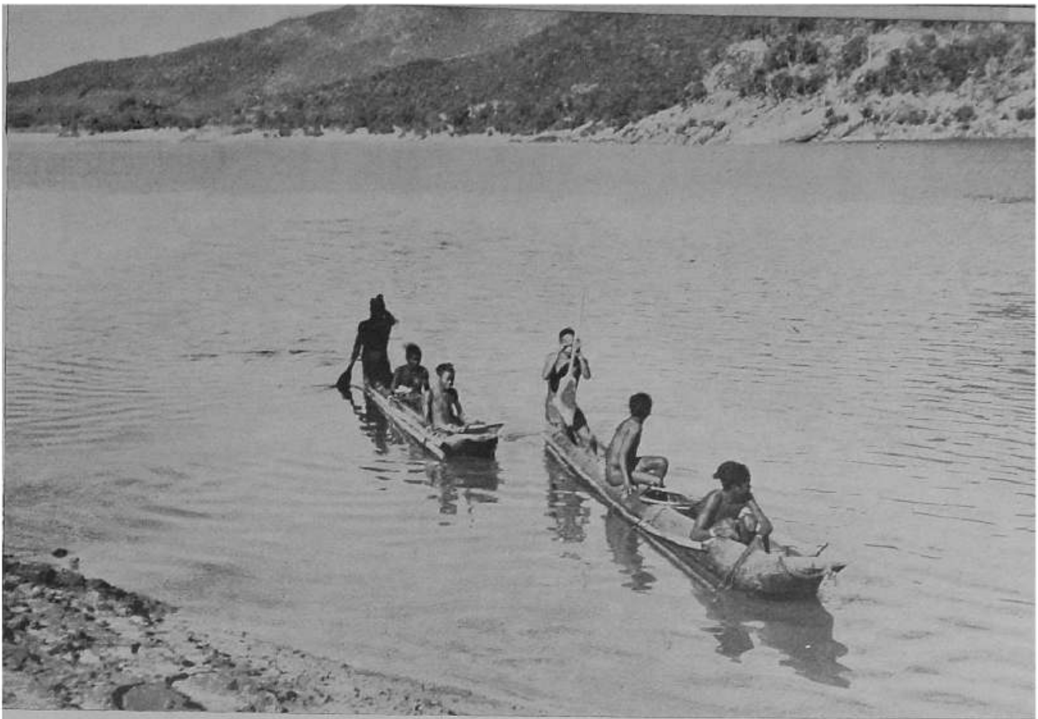


FIG. 35. Reddi dug-outs on the Godavari.

FIG. 36. The end of the hunt: tied to a dug-out the dead sambar is towed to the river-bank.

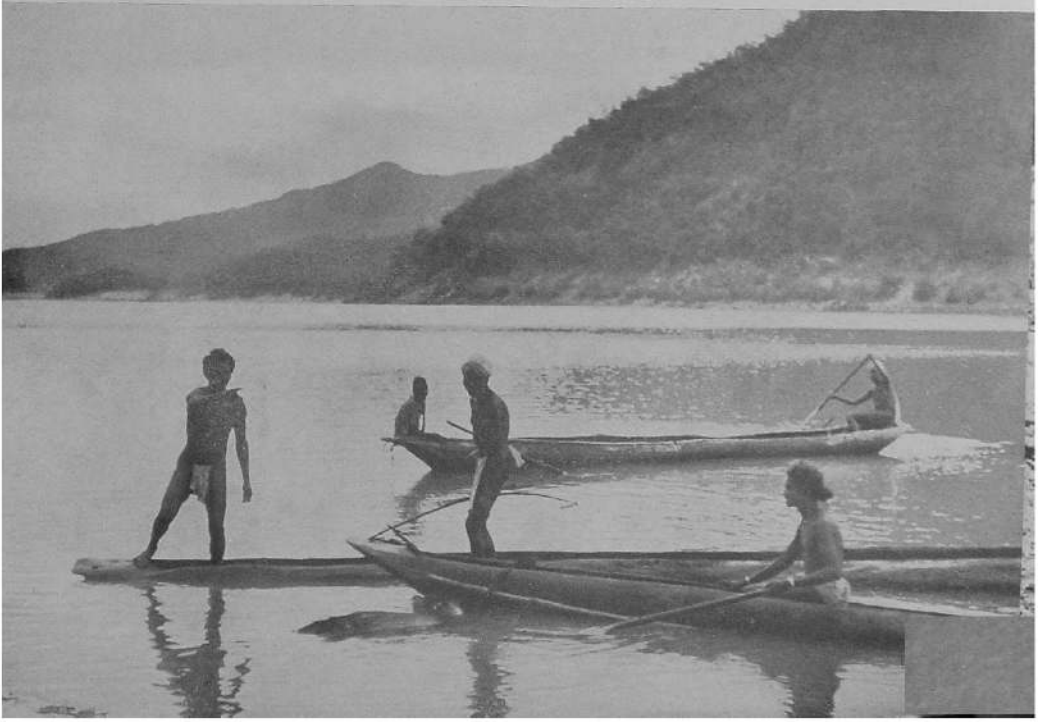


FIG. 37. Hill-fields above the Godavari.

CHAPTER VI.

# FOOD-PRODUCTION

THE tangle of wooded hills which is the home of the Reddis offers little scope for forms of agriculture other than shifting cultivation on hill-slopes, and even today this constitutes the principal means of subsistence for the greater part of the tribe. From time immemorial the Reddis have practised this method of tillage, while plough-cultivation, restricted to the small areas of flat land, is a comparatively recent innovation.

## *Shifting Cultivation*

Throughout the Telugu country shifting cultivation on hill-slopes cleared of forest growth is described as *podu*,[1] a term which is synonymous with *bewar* in the usage of the Central Provinces and *jhum* cultivation in that of Assam. Indeed, comparing the irregular patches of cultivation and young secondary jungle on the wooded hill-slopes in the Reddi country, with my remembrance of the landscape in the Naga Hills, I have found little difference except that the *podu* of the Reddi are usually smaller than the blocks of *jhum* cleared by the Nagas (Fig. 37).

The Reddis recognize no private ownership in forest and land suitable for *podu* cultivation, but each village community possesses communally a tract of land, whose boundaries are usually marked by hill ridges, watercourses or prominent trees. In some areas, however, where the population is very sparse and land plentiful, as for instance in the hill tract on the Hyderabad-Polavaram border, the boundaries are not clearly defined. There, many of the villages have been abandoned, the inhabitants moving down to the Godavari bank, and today no Reddi is able to say where the land of one village ends and that of the neighbouring settlement begins. The members of the community who enjoy the common ownership of a tract do not necessarily live in one settlement; their houses may be dotted in small groups over the village-land and no man is obliged to work the slopes nearest his habitation; he may equally well select a plot at the opposite end of the common tract, for Reddis are free to cultivate on any part of the village-land they may choose. The absence of regulated allotment of land for cultivation does not, as we might imagine, lead to disputes or friction.

1. The term *podu* is used also by the Maria Gonds of the Chanda and Drug Districts of the Central Provinces.

During extensive enquiries on this important aspect of land-tenure we were always assured that such quarrels never occurred,—a man finding another cutting a portion of jungle which he himself had intended to fell would repair to an adjoining slope without allowing the matter to become a bone of contention.

Once a man has cleared a piece of ground it remains in his undisputed possession for as long as he wishes to raise a crop on it, which is seldom more than three years and often only one or two. As soon as he abandons the field his claim lapses automatically and the land, reverting to jungle, returns to the joint possession of the community; when, after ten or twelve years, the forest is sufficiently grown to warrant the land being once more taken under the axe, the one time possessor has no privileged claim and any other man may forestall him in cutting the jungle; however, a timely announcement of his intention to cultivate the same slope once more would no doubt secure him its use.

Amicable settlement is the key-note of the distribution of cultivable lands in these communities, and the limitations of such a system do not become apparent as long as land is plentiful. In most areas where the Reddis live in their old traditional style they are scattered over the hills in such small numbers that the land is more than sufficient for the needs of cultivation. The reservation of forests naturally has had its repercussions, but in reviewing the traditional customs ruling land-tenure, we may for the present leave this factor out of account and consider those areas where the Reddis are still unhampered in the use of the forest.

Very illuminating in this respect are the conditions in the Northern Hills east of Patakota and Gurtedu. If we leave Patakota and the broad valley of the Gumma Revu and strike south-east into the hills, we pass only seven houses during a climb of some three miles. These stand in small clearings, singly and in groups of two or three, while the surrounding hill slopes bear good forest and show few signs of old fellings. In an area of about twenty square miles, the densely forested mountain tract to the north and east of Katramraj Konda stretching towards the Sileru, I counted only twenty-six houses, of which ten form the village of Siramkota, while the others stand alone or in small groups. In this densely forested mountainous tract the available land many times exceeds the needs of cultivation, and it is not surprising that here the distribution of *podu*-fields constitute no problem. No other condition makes for such smooth working of joint ownership as an abundance of the commodity to be shared, and individual proprietorship must hold little attraction where a surplus of hill-slopes suitable for cultivation permits every man to follow his own inclination in the choice of a site and to take under the axe land to the limit of his family's working capacity. Here land is not the object of sale or purchase, and it cannot be inherited except in the sense that every male child born

into the village-community automatically acquires a right in the common village-land, and that in case of a man's sudden decease a son or brother will take over his field under cultivation.

In the valley south of Siramkota, the scenery undergoes a noticeable change; virgin forest is restricted to the crests of the hills and the beds of the valleys while the greater part of the slopes are either actually under cultivation or still show signs of recent fellings. The evident cause for this sparsity of high forest lies in the size of Chaprai, the village in possession of this particular tract. With three settlements and a total of twenty-two households crowded together at the head of a valley, the community is at present cultivating the land to the limit of, or perhaps even slightly above, the recuperative capacity of the forest, and the observation of a definite cycle of rotation and a systematic distribution of land may soon become imperative; but before this point is reached, some families may perhaps move to a neighbouring tract with a surplus of cultivable land. Yet although permission to settle is as a rule easily obtainable, particularly if family ties connect the prospective settlers with the owners of the soil, such a course is not always followed and we find that the contiguous land south of the overpopulated Chaprai, in the possession of the four-house settlement of Jelagolova, is once again thickly covered with forest, which is only occasionally marked by recent and current cultivation.

Beyond the Jelagolova boundary, we come to the large village of Kanivada, where a growing, though by no means serious, pressure on land has brought about the curtailment of the individual's freedom in the choice of cultivable land. Here the consent of the headman must be sought before a piece of jungle is taken under the axe; this consent may be withheld on the ground that the forest growth is not yet sufficiently developed, or that another man has already staked his claim on the land in question. Such an arrangement is still rather exceptional, but it shows that even customs as deeply rooted as the Reddi's otherwise undisputed right to cultivate where he pleases on the village land, are subject to modification when changing conditions call for some measure of control.

Full freedom in the choice of slopes for cultivation reigns still in the same hill-villages of Hyderabad and Polavaram Taluq. In the big river villages on the Godavari, where a shortage of land might have become chronic, the energy of the Reddis has been largely deflected from *podu* to plough-cultivation and to forest labour. Here pressure on *podu*-land has therefore never warranted special provision to ensure its equal distribution; this is still a matter of mutual and informal agreement and there is no agency for an organized allotment of hill-slopes suitable for cultivation.

Practically unrestricted in the choice of *podu*-land, the Reddi has evidently two courses open to him: regardless of others he may select a

hill-slope and work it only with the help of his family, or he may combine with several other men in clearing a large block of land. In small communities where the social cohesion is great, several men of one settlement sometimes cultivate a whole hill-side jointly and divide the crop. This method is usually followed by brothers or brothers-in-law and particularly by families living under one roof, who co-operate in felling the jungle, in clearing and weeding the field, in sowing and reaping, but share out the grain once the harvest has been garnered. In Gogulapudi, for instance, Golla Potreddi (House 3) and Boli Kanaya, who lived under one roof, cultivated a field together, sharing the labour and dividing the grain after the harvest. But Gurgunta Chinnaya (House 5), his son and his two sons-in-law, who cultivated a large block kept all the grain in a common store.

Occasionally, as in Balamamidi, a village situated in the Godavari gorge, or Kumalvaru in the Northern Hills, the men co-operate only in preparing a block of land for sowing, and then they divide it into fields, and each household sows, tends and reaps its own crop.

In other villages, however, and particularly the larger villages of the river-bank, each man works his own hill-field throughout, without receiving assistance either in the felling of the jungle, in the sowing of the seed or the reaping of the grain. This individualistic trend is particularly noticeable where plough-cultivation on permanent, privately owned fields exists side by side with *podu*-cultivation.

What is the Reddi's method of raising crops on *podu*-fields? About the end of January, when undergrowth and creepers begin to wither and the jungle is dry and brittle, he selects a hill-slope and starts felling the trees. Single-handed a man may clear an average-sized field, *i.e.*, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres in about a fortnight, but the Reddi seldom works consecutively and so he often takes considerably longer. For felling, he uses an ordinary handle-holed axe (*godali*) and a bill-hook (*kati*); the latter instrument is a curved, broad-bladed knife with the cutting edge on the concave curve of the blade, which is inserted into the handle by means of a tang (Fig. I, 1). Large trees are cut with the axe, usually two to three feet above the ground, the trunk being chipped on alternate sides, while the bill-hook serves for lopping smaller growth and branches and clearing undergrowth. Only mango and jack-fruit trees are spared, for their fruits are too valuable to be sacrificed. The clearing of the jungle is hard work and those regarding *podu* as a lazy method of cultivation should compare the energy expended by a Reddi in felling trees, cutting creepers as thick as a man's arm, clearing the thick brushwood and burning the jungle, with the leisurely way in which the Telugu ploughman drives his plough through the soft soil of his oft cultivated flat land.

While every other important phase in the Reddi's agricultural

activities is initiated by ritual acts, no ceremony precedes the felling of the jungle.

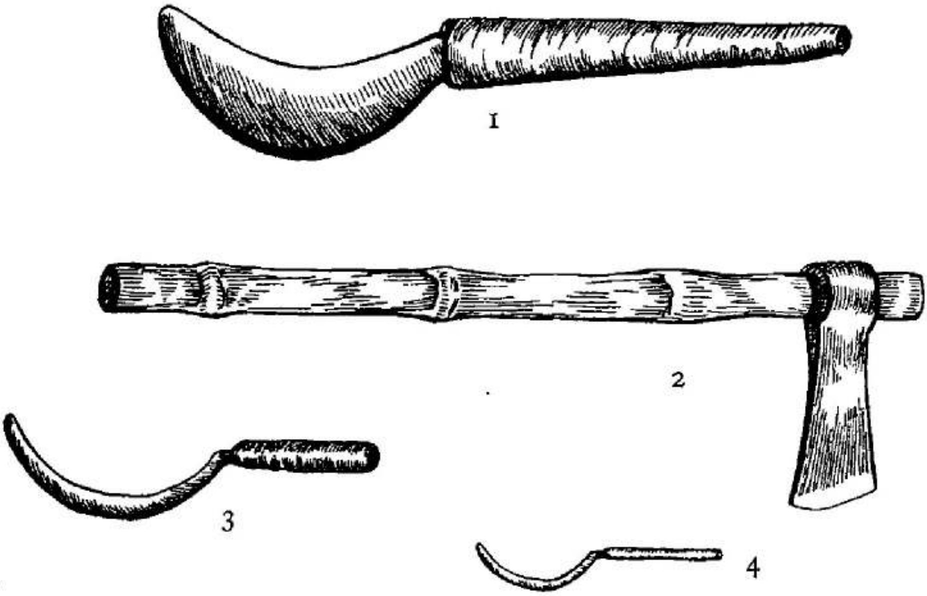



FIG. I. Cutting Implements.
1. Bill-hook; 2. Axe; 3. Sickle; 4. Reaping Knife.

During February and March practically no rain falls in the Reddi country and the felled jungle is well dried and ready for firing by the first week of April. The burning of the fields takes several days and at night the slopes are picked out in glowing lines of creeping fire. Usually these fires are kept well under control, but tongues of flame sometimes spring up under a sudden wind and leap into the neighbouring forest, where, however, they sweep rapidly through the dry grass and undergrowth without doing, at least from the Reddis' point of view, any serious damage.

After the first firing, half-burnt branches are collected in heaps and then reduced to ashes; the ashes are not raked or distributed over the soil in any way nor is the ground scarified before the seed is sown. Charred tree trunks are left where they lie until the following year when, together with the still standing stems of the previous crop, the lopped shoots from pollarded stumps and undergrowth they are burnt before the sowing of the second year's crop. In the Godavari Region some Reddis augment the ashes on the fields cultivated for the second or third year by lopping branches in the nearby jungle and heaping them on the fires, but in the Northern Hills, where both soil and forest growth are richer, the Reddis do not seem to practise this method.

The felling of the jungle is man's work, but men, women and children work together in tidying up and burning the fields; those men who have co-operated in cutting a block of jungle, but who want to raise separate crops, then divide the land into strips, and demarcate the boundaries with stones, low earth dams or half burnt logs dragged into line. Sometimes rows of *Hibiscus cannabinus* are sown to mark the limits of the fields.

Unlike shifting cultivators of other tribes, the Reddi seldom works first and second year fields simultaneously. He usually cultivates a field adequate to his needs for one, two or even three successive years, according to the fertility of the soil, and then abandons it altogether and cuts a new *podu*. Where forest conservancy interferes with the Reddi's out of hand selection of *podu*-fields he sometimes cuts two separate small fields, if he can find no other suitable land.

The preparation of the hill-fields is generally completed by the beginning of May, but sowing is deferred till the first showers of the monsoon moisten the parched earth. This time of waiting is used to erect field-houses—substantial square houses with walls and pyramidal thatched roof (*chen paka*) where the field is far from the village and the family intends to live there while the grain is in ear, and low thatched shelters or huts (*mancha*) where the field is within easy reach of the village. Some Reddis of the hills enclose their *podu* with rail fencing—bamboo poles horizontally laid between pairs of stakes—and this work is either done at this time or is delayed until after sowing.

Isolated bursts of rain occur usually about the middle of May and, risking a dry spell at the beginning of June, which might wither the sprouting crop, the Reddis in the Northern Hills start sowing at that time. The Reddis of the Godavari Region, however, wait before entrusting their seed to the earth for the real breaking of the monsoon, which generally occurs in the second week of June.

Among all groups of Reddis sowing is preceded by a great feast, which culminates in a solemn sacrifice offered to the Earth Mother, and which is called the Bhumi Devata Panduga, the feast of the earth-goddess. The details of this rite and the forms in which it is observed by different groups of Reddis will be discussed in Chapter X, but certain features are universal and may be cited here. It is always the religious representative of the community, generally described as *pujari*, who performs the main ritual and who, in sacrificing a chicken or pig to the earth-goddess, paves the way for the sacrifices of the individual householders. The *pujari* usually conducts the rites on his own field or in a central place at the junction of several fields. The blood of the sacrificial animal is allowed to drip first on the earth and then on to the heaped seed-grain which has been collected from all householders. This act formally initiates the sowing, but the seed is not necessarily sown immediately. It is customary for all the men to go hunting for two

or three days and to start sowing only on the fourth day after the festival, when each householder sacrifices a chicken on his own field, plucks out a feather from the wing and sticks it in his sowing basket.

Two methods of sowing on *podu*-fields are practised by the Reddis: the broadcasting of the seed-grain over the surface of the earth and the dibbling of the seeds into holes made with a digging stick. Broadcasting is employed for the small millets such as *sama* (*Panicum miliare*) *korra* (*Panicum italicum*) and *tsollu* (*Eleusine coracana*),[1] while *zonna* (*Sorghum vulgare*)[2] and various kinds of pulses, such as *kandi* (*Cajanus indicus*), and maize (*Zea mays*) are dibbled into the ground. Where *zonna,* generally known in India as jawari-millet, is not grown, as in the Northern Hills, broadcasting is the only method practised on hill-fields. In between the grain crops and pulses, Reddis sometimes sow *gogu* (*Hibiscus Cannabinus*) of which both leaves and seeds are eaten.

In the south the Reddis grow jawari and the small millets, usually as a mixed crop. The small millets are sown first; men, but never women, broadcast two or even three varieties of mixed seed with a scything movement of the left hand, scattering a little grain at each step. After the small millets have sprouted, jawari is planted and this work is carried out by both men and women who spread out across the field and work the area from top to bottom. Where *kandi* (*Cajanus indicus*), the red gram commonly known as 'dal,' or other pulses are raised the seed is intermixed with that of jawari. The holes are made slightly in front of the sower, who stabs the earth with his long-handled digging stick, and bending forward drops a seed into the hole with his right hand (Fig. 38); he then steps on the seed thus treading in the earth. Jawari-millet is not sown in rows, the holes being made at random obliquely left, right, or straight ahead in between the shoots of the small millets. Sometimes, so I was told, the men make the holes and the women follow in their footsteps, dropping in the seeds and treading them into the earth. The sower carries the seed in a small square basket (*parka butta*) hung on a string over the left shoulder, but it is equally usual for men to wrap a piece of cloth round their waists, pouching it slightly to hold the seed grain, while women often carry the seed in a fold of their sari.

In the Northern Hills no jawari-millet is raised and the small millets *sama* and *korra* are sown as a first crop at the end of May, and *tsollu* later towards the end of June. There the Reddis say that *sama* grows best on the higher and *tsollu* on the lower slopes. In the Rampa country the Reddis include bajra (*Penisetum typhoideum*) among the mixed crops on hill-fields, but I have never seen it grown in the Godavari Region.

1. These are the three main kinds of small millets, grown by the Reddis, but there are also a great number of other varieties which I was unable to identify.

2. The Reddis differentiate between the ordinary great millet (*zonna*) grown on flat fields and hill-millet (*konda zonna*) grown mainly on *podu*, but both seem to be varieties of *Sorghum vulgare*.

When the young crop has sprouted two or three inches, the cultivator goes over the field and replants barren patches. If a man has cut a very large field, his relations or friends help him after they have finished sowing their own fields and at harvest time he may give them a few seers of grain in recognition of their assistance.

We come now to an important difference in agricultural methods between the Southern and the Northern Reddis. Those of the Godavari Region and the majority of the Rampa Country do not turn over the soil on their *podu*-fields, and use digging-sticks for making the holes to take the seed of jawari and pulses. Those of the Northern Hills, on the other hand, possess hoes with which they rake up the earth after the seed has been broadcast (Fig. 39). Jawari-millet is not grown in this area, and although the Reddis possess digging-sticks for root digging and gardening, they do not use them on their *podu*-fields. These hoes (*holwa*) have a long handle of wood or bamboo with a thickened head into which a narrow shouldered blade is inserted at right angles by a tang. This blade is often used alternatively in hoe and digging-stick.

The use of hoes, even of this primitive type, marks a considerable advance on the agricultural methods of the Southern Reddis, for turning over the soil undoubtedly increases its productivity. We shall see that a similar type of hoe is found among the Dires, the neighbours of the Reddis to the north, and it is probable that the use of the hoe in the Northern Hills is due to a cultural influence from that side; this may explain why its distribution does not extend further south than the Boduluru *mutta*. The Reddis near Chodavaram and all those in the Godavari Region are as yet unacquainted with the hoe as an agricultural instrument.

The border between hoe-cultivation and digging-stick cultivation coincides, as far as the Reddis are concerned, roughly with the northern boundary of the jawari-growing area. Small quantities of jawari are, however, grown in Boduluru, north of the Pamuleru, and here we find both hoe and digging-stick used on hill-fields, the one for digging over the soil and the other for planting jawari.

Besides the small millets, *sama, korra* and *tsollu,* and the great millet, the Reddis also grow maize, taro and a variety of pulses on their hill-fields. All these crops are dibbled into the earth in the same manner as jawari, the work being done by both men and women.

Once all the crops have been committed to the earth, the Reddi enjoys a short period of respite. But the heavy rainfall of the advancing monsoon stimulates the growth of weed and shrub to such an extent that his energy is soon absorbed by pruning and weeding lest the quick growing weeds and the prolific sprouting of pollarded stumps overshadow and stunt the young crop.

In the first year of cultivation a hill-slope needs weeding only once,

FIG. 38. Planting *jawari*-millet with digging-sticks.

FIG. 39. Reddis in the Northern Hills preparing a field with hoes.

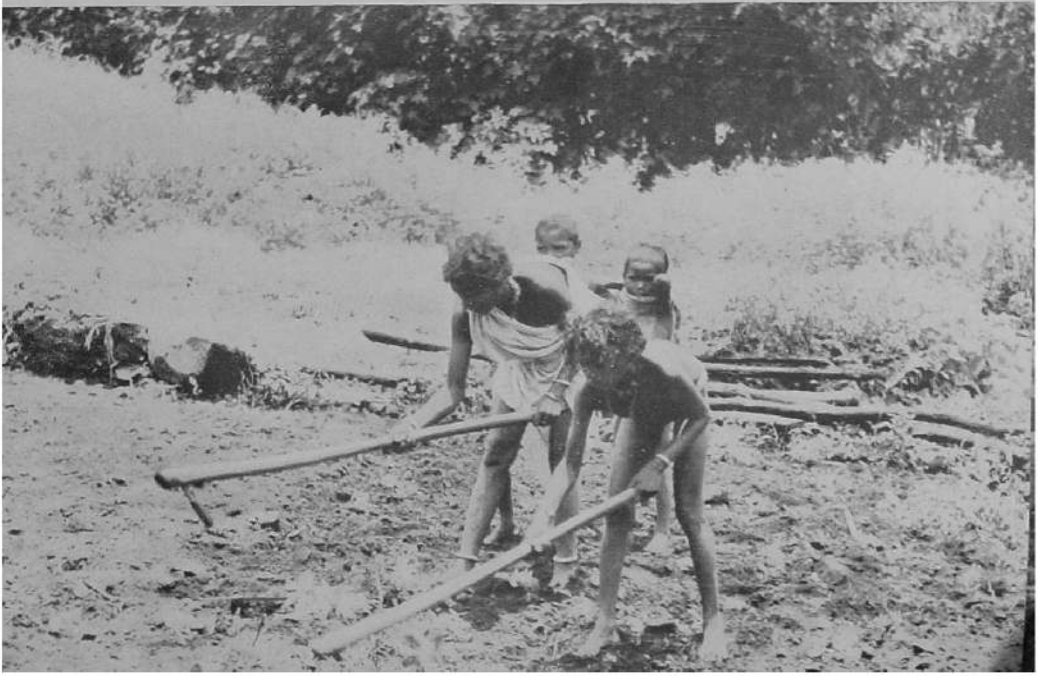


FIG. 40. Chasing the birds from the ripening millet with stones and sling.

FIG. 41. Reaping the small millets with sickles.

but in the second and third year the more prolific weeds must be eradicated twice: once when the grain is about one foot high, and once when it is three or four feet high. Men and women work side by side at this time, using their general utility implement, the bill-hook, to oust the weeds; the rubbish is collected in armfuls and burnt on the edge of the fields.

It has been suggested that shifting cultivators, who till the soil without the help of ploughs, show, even when flat land is available, a marked preference for hill-slopes because on the hill-sides they are just able to gain control over the weeds, while in the more fertile soil of the valley the plants' vitality outstrips man's energy. I think that this theory is essentially sound, and it would be a plausible explanation for the non-development of much of the open valley-land north of the Pamuleru River.

No ceremony accompanies the weeding, which though important does not necessitate renewed address to the gods. Indeed most Reddis do not perform any agricultural rite between sowing and harvest. But if the crops show particular promise, a cock may be sacrificed to the earth-goddess in order to sustain her favour and in Kumalvaru, a village on the edge of the Gudem hills, I was told that when the crops were about one foot high a pig was sacrificed to Bhumi Devata.

From the time when the first ears form, the crops are continuously guarded against the depredations of wild pig, deer, monkeys and every kind of bird. Those Reddis who have built solid houses on the edge of their field move thither with their families and household goods for the whole of the period the grain is in ear, while others maintain a running service between house and field-hut. Men generally take the night watch, while women, after preparing the morning meal, fetching water and attending to other domestic tasks, set out for the fields when the sun is already in the sky. With them they take glowing embers, to rekindle the field-hut hearth and a pot of gruel for the morning meal. Sometimes the whole family spends the day on the fields, returning to the village only in the evening, but usually women and children guard the crops during the day, while the men occupy themselves in other ways. Boys and girls and even quite small children take their turn on the high bamboo platforms which are put up in the middle of the fields after the first weeding (Fig. 42). These platforms, often fifteen feet high, are set on poles and are ascended by roughly runged ladders; they are sometimes thatched, but generally the watcher's only protection against the sun is a piece of cloth or the end of a sari pulled over the head.

Birds are the most tiresome and constant menace to the ripening crops, and bands of monkeys can clear a field within a very short time; fortunately however their clamorous and ceaseless chatter gives ample warning of their approach. Where fields are not fenced-in wild pigs,

which break the stalks of the grain, and deers, which browse on the tender leaves, are more dangerous; at night they slink silently into the field and unobserved do a great deal of damage.

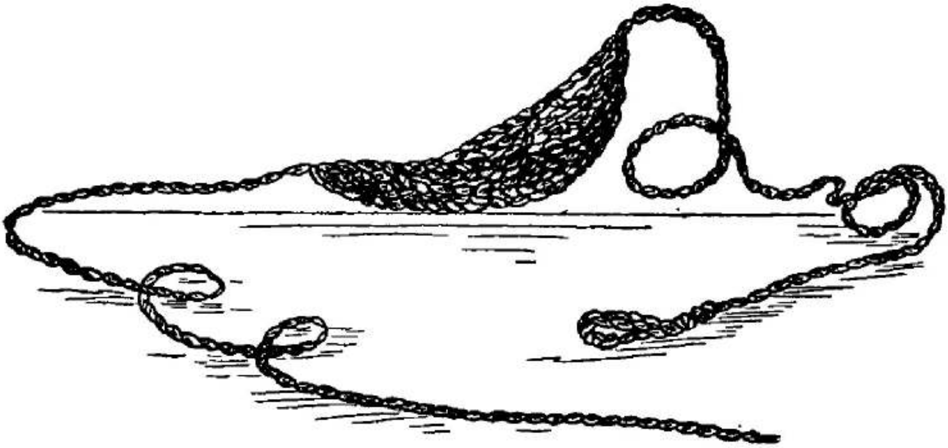


FIG. J. Sling used in scaring birds.

At various points the watcher in the field erects split bamboo clappers, which can be operated by strings converging on the high platform; rapid jerkings set the tongues vibrating and produce a clatter, calculated to frighten the more daring animals. Men and boys are fairly expert in manipulating a two armed sling (Fig. J.), which, whirled round the head, projects a rain of pebbles to the most distant corner of the field; hits are seldom scored, but the commotion generally suffices to repel invaders at least temporarily (Fig. 40). Scarecrows in the form of baskets inverted on small stakes are sometimes put up amongst the crop to warn off wild pigs, and at night fires are lighted under the field platforms. Booing and shouting is then the principal weapon for keeping the jungle thieves at bay.

The first crops to ripen are *sama* (*Panicum miliare*) and *korra* (*Panicum italicum*), which are harvested between the end of August and the end of September. At the same time ripens a wild grass (*chippa*), which grows without being sown on hill-fields, and is reaped, threshed and eaten together with the small millets. Before the Reddis begin reaping, they perform the *sama kotta,* the first-eating ceremony, which culminates in the offering of the new grain to the departed and will be described in greater length in Chapter X. In Gogulapudi, where I watched this ceremony, the *pujari* and his brother, after offering a fowl to their village-deity, reaped a small quantity of *sama,* not of that year's sowing but grain that had sprouted from wind scattered seed of last year's harvest and had ripened a few days before the bulk of the crop. This *sama* was dried in the sun, husked and eaten on the day it was cut, and a part of it was offered to the Departed. From that

day on—it was the 21st August—everybody in the village was free to begin his harvest, and the *pujari's* brother started reaping his *sama* crop four days later. Several women of other households helped him and received three seers of *sama* each in payment of their labour.

The Reddis in the hills, who cultivate only *podu*-fields, observe as a rule but one first eating ceremony for grain, namely the *sama kotta,* though in some places a similar ceremony is performed before the reaping of the jawari-millet. In the villages on the Godavari, however, separate ceremonies are held for the small millets, for jawari and for the crops grown on plough-fields; the attendant ritual, which is very elaborate, includes a public as well as a domestic ceremony.

Where taro is grown on hill-fields, a first eating ceremony for this crop is performed even before the *sama kotta* and sometimes as early as the second weeding; this ceremony lifts the taboo on the eating of all cultivated vegetables and no additional ceremonies are held for the first eating of marrows, cucumbers and yams. If taro is grown in kitchen-gardens, however, no ceremony precedes its consumption.

Some Reddis sacrifice a chicken to Bhumi Devata when they start reaping, but this sacrifice may be omitted; it is only the first-eating rite which is universal and obligatory.

*Sama* and *korra* are reaped with small knives (Fig. I, 4) the stalks being cut just below the ears. The reaper uses only the right hand; with his forefinger against the back of the knife, he guides the stalk with the thumb towards the edge, and severs the ear with a slightly upward movement as he bends the stalk (Fig. 41). The reaped ears are collected in the left hand and now and then deposited in a basket. It is customary for both men and women to reap, but in those villages where the men are engaged in forest labour, women usually cut the grain. *Tsollu* ripens soon after *sama* and *korra* and is reaped similarly, but hill-jawari takes two to three months longer and can seldom be harvested before the end of December. It is reaped in a slightly different manner: the tall stalks, sometimes as much as ten or twelve feet high, are trodden over so that the great heavy heads lie upon the ground, when they are easily severed from the stalks. Reddis who have no cattle leave the stalks of all grain standing on the fields to be burnt before next year's sowing, but others turn in their cattle to graze on the straw.

In August before the first crop is gathered, the Reddis' *podu* resembles a garden rather than a grain field. There is a multitude of crops, all intermingled—the early ripening small millets with their delicate ears bowed and heavy with grain, some tinted gold and others purple, white and mauve blossoms of flowering pulses and the stout, brilliantly green stalks of the great millet already eight feet high; here and there are clumps of even taller maize, the bulging cobs scarcely concealed within their bursting sheaths, and on the margin of the field the low

growing fleshy leaves of taro. Yellow flowering marrows ramble over the field hut, and beans climb the tall poles of the bamboo platform.

There is no great harvest, for each crop is reaped as it ripens and the Reddis, as though plucking flowers, thread their way through the rank growth, gleaning here and there a ripe ear.

A song describes the gathering of the *gogu* leaves on the high moon-lit hill-slopes, but in more prosaic practice the Reddis reap, of course, only at daytime;

Reap, oh reap the *gogu* food,
The *gogu* plants stand on the mountain,
The *gogu* plants stand on the hill-slopes,
Covered are the hills with *gogu,*
Ripe and heavy are their heads.
On their heads the moonlight shines,
On the hills the moonlight shines;
The *gogu* plants grow on the hills,
Cut the heads, oh Narsama;
Cut the heads with two leaves each,
Go on cutting buds and blue leaves,
Go on cutting all the blue leaves,
In your loin-cloth gather blue leaves,
Oh brothers, brothers, all the blue leaves!
As you go, they drop, the buds and blue leaves,
In your loin-cloth gather blue leaves.
Oh brothers, brothers, all the blue leaves!
Oh Narsama, share out the blue leaves.

The reaped grain is allowed to dry and then stored in the field house. Only as much grain is threshed out every two or three days as is needed for immediate consumption. Some Reddis thresh on the level ground in front of the field-house, while others carry home the ears in baskets and thresh on a mat or the bare floor of their houses. The threshing is done by both men and women. *Sama* and *korra* are trodden under foot with a grinding movement, while *tsollu* and jawari are beaten out with rods. The winnowing is done by women, who toss the grain in a winnowing fan, usually sitting on the floor of the veranda.

In some areas whole ears, sufficient for the next year's sowing, are put into receptacles made of *Bauhinia vahlii* leaves and stored in the attic; but other Reddis do not set apart the seed until their store of grain is running low, when they put a small quantity into a mud plaster-ed basket to be kept as seed.

The various pulses and beans ripen at different times, some as early as November. These are dried and kept until the first eating ceremony for beans, the Chikurkai Panduga, which is the latest of the agricultural feasts and is seldom celebrated before January.

Fig. 42. Guarding the hill-millet.

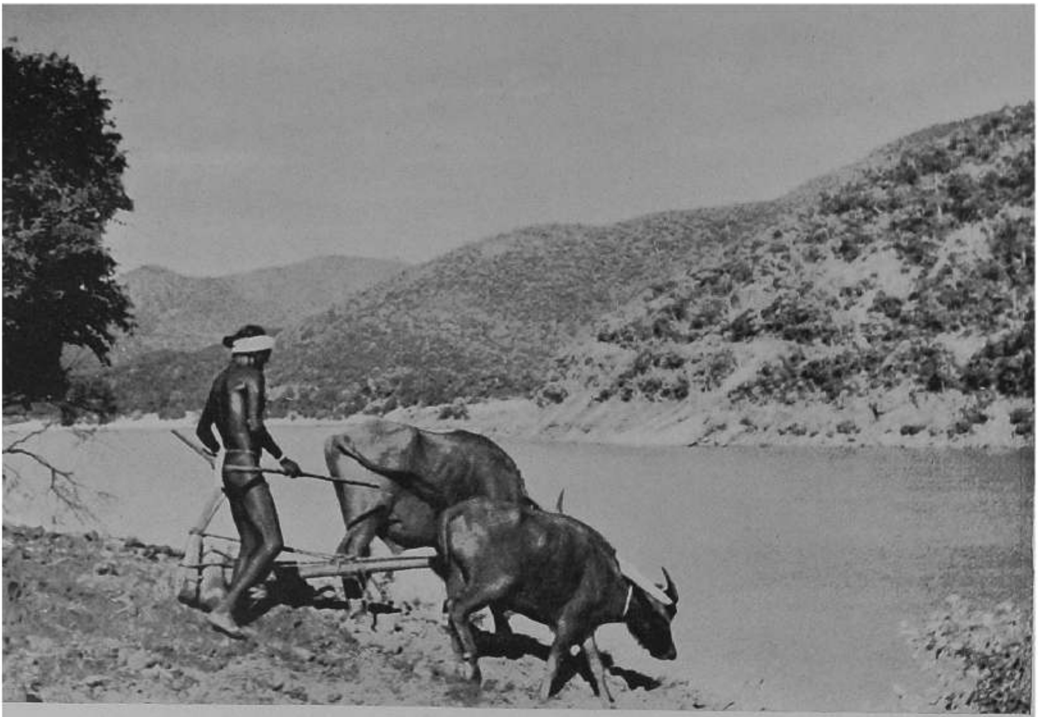
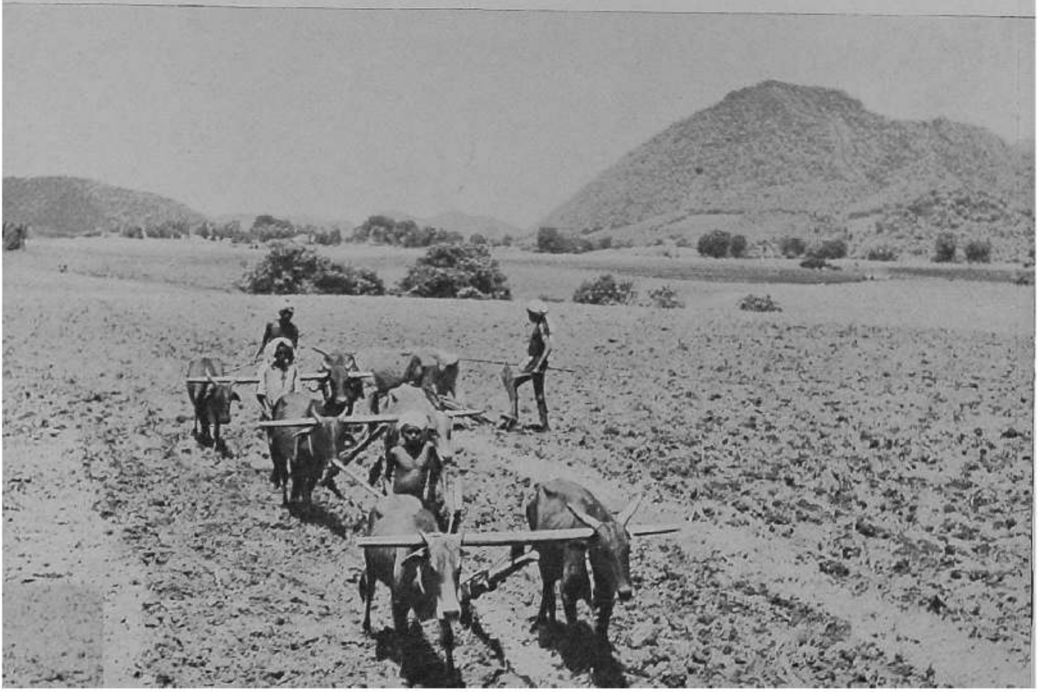


FIG. 43. Ploughing a tobacco-plot on the Godavari.

FIG. 44. In teams the Reddis plough their flat fields.



To all practical purposes the harvest of the last grain crop, which is jawari in the south and *tsollu* in the north, concludes the agricultural year. Till the felling of the jungle on the new *podu*-fields some six or eight weeks later, there is little to do, and the Reddis enjoy the comparative plenty of the new harvest. This is a favourable time for weddings and for visits to relations in other villages, when it is customary to take a little of the new grain as a gift; indeed after any crop is reaped, Reddis visiting other villages take small quantities of the new grain to their near relations.

It is almost impossible to estimate exactly how long the grain produced by the Reddi on his *podu*-field lasts him in an average year. In the Northern Hills, where no other occupation distracts him from work on the fields and the care of the crops, and where hoes are used for digging over the soil, the production of grain is often sufficient to sustain a family throughout the year and even allow the sale of a small surplus to itinerant traders. In bad years, however, even with the most careful husbandry their store of grain fails some months before the first crops ripen, and they then live mainly on jungle produce. In the Godavari Region, and particularly in the villages on the river bank, *podu*-cultivation has become largely a subsidiary means of subsistence, while forest-labour and in rarer cases plough-cultivation occupies the first place in Reddi economy. The details and effects of this gradual transition will be fully discussed in Chapter XI; here it suffices to say that few Reddis in those parts raise more grain on their *podu*-fields than will last for three or four months after the harvest of the last crop, thus leaving a gap of four or five months until the first grain of the early ripening millets is available. The fact that even the people of such hill-villages as Gogulapudi, who have no flat fields and are not employed as forest-labourers, do not grow sufficient grain to feed them throughout the year, seems to indicate that the digging-stick cultivators of the south have always counted on augmenting their agricultural produce with the wild fruits of the jungle.

## *Plough-Cultivation*

The plough is a comparatively recent addition to the Reddis material possessions. Of this fact there can be little reasonable doubt, for all evidence points in the same direction: the Reddis in the interior of the hills, who have preserved most of their tribal characteristics, do not use ploughs, and many of them do not even possess cattle, which alone makes ploughing possible; wherever Reddis do plough, a strong influence from neighbouring populations is also discernible, and their plough is of the same type as that in use in the Telugu country.

What is doubtful, however, is when plough-cultivation was first adopted by the Reddis. Few groups seem to have practised it for more than four or five generations, while others have taken to ploughing

much more recently; near Patakota we came across a community which only the year before had left the interior of the hills and felled the jungle in the bed of the valley, borrowed bulls from a neighbouring village, and was ploughing for the first time. Here we witnessed the actual transition from hoe to plough-cultivation, and there can be no doubt that the same process is being enacted elsewhere in those hills and that the plough is gaining ground at the expense of the hoe and the digging-stick. Yet the character of the Reddi country, many parts of which are entirely unsuitable for plough-cultivation, limits any large-scale development in this direction, and it remains to be seen whether the Reddis of the future will forsake their old homeland and collect in the broad valleys, where flat land affords an opportunity for ploughing, or whether certain groups will continue to cling to their hills and to their *podu*-cultivation.

The adoption of the plough does not necessitate an immediate relinquishment of the principle of *podu*, though ultimately it leads to a more permanent and intensive exploitation of the soil. In the Rampa Country, for instance, many Reddis practise shifting-cultivation on flat lands, felling the jungle in the usual way and ploughing between the tree stumps, which they avoid as best they can by deviating the furrows or lifting the plough over obstacles. This method is known as *chelka podu* and may be considered the preliminary step to permanent cultivation. Crops raised in this manner are generally superior to those raised on hill-slopes, for the plough rakes up the soil more thoroughly than the hoe and is more efficient in destroying weeds and suckers.

Where sufficient flat land is available and Forest rules allow the Reddi abandons his *chelka podu* after two or three years and takes a new block of land under the plough, thus combining the advantages of ploughing and of shifting cultivation. But in most parts of the Reddi country, as for instance in the alluvial pockets on the banks of the Godavari, level ground is limited; continuous shifting of fields is therefore impossible and the same lands are cultivated year after year. With regular ploughing it is found convenient to eradicate the old tree stumps, and the land thus becomes *polam bhumi* or permanently cultivated land.

The Reddi soon finds that land which is not allowed to revert to jungle and is not fertilized by ash is apt to deteriorate, and he has therefore taken to using animal manure on his permanent fields. If he owns a fair amount of cattle this is not difficult and he manures his plough-land in the same way as the Telugu cultivator: in the weeks before ploughing he grazes his cattle on last year's stubble by day, and at night pens the animals in serried patches over the ground he intends to cultivate, moving the enclosure every day and thus ensuring an equal distribution of the manure.

Such a course, however, is only possible if a man has sufficient

cattle. Those Reddis who own only one pair of bulls, or have to borrow bulls for ploughing, cannot manure their fields, and many of those who have recently settled in plains villages, given up *podu*-cultivation and taken to ploughing complain that from year to year their permanent fields are deteriorating and that they were better off as long as they cut *podu*. The need for manure is less pressing in the river villages of the Godavari Region, for here the periodical floods fertilize the adjoining land by deposits of river mud.

The main crops grown by Reddis on permanent fields are jawari-millet, *tsollu* and rice. The first two are raised on dry fields and the latter on semi-wet fields, that is fields enclosed by bunds which are rain-fed and not irrigated. On both dry and wet fields ploughing begins after the monsoon has broken and the soil is moist and easily loosened.[1] Reddis who work both *podu* and flat fields, give their attention first to the *podu*-fields and start ploughing only when the sowing of the hill-crops is completed.

Ploughing is invariably done by men, and both bullocks and buffaloes are employed as draught animals. The plough is a simple wooden implement made in two parts with a single driving handle about three feet from the ground and an iron-tipped ploughshare. It is evident that an instrument of this kind only cuts narrow and shallow furrows, and does not turn the soil; consequently the land must be ploughed more than once if ploughing is to be effective. Generally the Reddis, like Telugu cultivators, plough in teams of three to six, one plough following the other and working up and down the field with frequently overlapping furrows (Fig. 44). Rich men hire workers, providing ploughs and bullocks, and pay them in grain, but the more usual course is for several men to pool their resources and work on each man's field in turn.

Ploughing is a forenoon's occupation, and it is seldom that ploughmen are to be seen at work after midday. Every day a new portion of the field, perhaps thirty yards by twenty yards is taken under the plough, being worked first lengthwise and then crosswise. The purpose of ploughing is as much the destruction of the weeds as turning over the soil, and the ultimate result is a fairly level surface, with the earth well broken.

Before sowing the owner of the field sacrifices a chicken to Bhumi Devata, but there is no public first-sowing ceremony nor do villagers all start sowing their flat fields at the same time.

The first crop to be sown is rice; this is broadcast with a horizontal sweep of the right hand. Immediately after the sowing the fields are ploughed again and dams are heaped up round the individual plots to prevent the rain-water from draining away. Some of those Reddis who

1. This practice is very much in contrast with that prevailing among the Gonds in the north of Hyderabad who plough their fields throughout the hot season and sow with the first rains.

have no *podu*-fields sow at the same time, *i.e.*, soon after the break of the monsoon, *tsollu*, yellow jawari and *konda zonna*, the tall variety of jawari which reaches heights of over eleven feet and does not ripen until the middle of the cold weather. Only small plots, usually near the houses, are sown with maize, *sama* and *korra*.

After the sowing of these rain-crops, the Reddis plough that part of their land which is set aside for the crops growing in the cool weather. White jawari is sown at the end of September and in some years, when the rains last long and the Godavari has flooded the flat land, as late as the first days of November.

The seed of this millet is often mixed with pulse, particularly green-gram, in the ratio of about twenty seers of jawari to one seer of pulse. This mixed seed is dropped in the furrows by a man walking behind the plougher. When the shoots are about one foot high a plough is carefully driven in between the rows in order to level the weeds, and women following complete the weeding. Rice is weeded twice, and the women stooping amidst the yellowing leaves sometimes sing snatches of songs:

Oh Jenakura[1] Jenavilo, what song are you singing near the field she is reaping?
Oh Jenakura Jenavilo, it is not the guitar song, but the song of the flute,
Oh Jenakura Jenavilo the he-goats were gathered which way have they gone?
Oh Jenakura Jenavilo what song are you singing near the field she is reaping,
Oh Jenakura Jenavilo near the teak-trees of Tekpalli[2] what song have you sung?
Oh Jenakura Jenavilo near the fields of Kakishnur what songs have you sung?
Oh Jenakura Jenavilo what song are you singing near the field she is reaping.

Another of these women's songs speaks of the *gogu* flower, a favourite motif in Reddi poetry:

A faded flower came; oh come, I cannot come,
A *gogu* flower came; oh come, I cannot come,
No one is coming, oh *gogu* flower,
Not a single one comes, oh *gogu* flower,
On this side and that side, oh *gogu* flower,
There is none to be seen, oh *gogu* flower,
She cuts and dries the *gogu* flower,
At night she cuts the *gogu* flowers,
One *gogu* flower she cuts,

1. Jenakura is a personage occurring in the *Ramayana*, but the Reddis know nothing of the connection and have obviously picked up the words Jenakura Jenavilo from a Telugu song.

2. Tekpalli and Kakishnur are villages near Koinda where this song was recorded.

Two *gogu* flowers she cuts,
Three *gogu* flowers she cuts,

And so on and on as far as Reddi women can count or until someone starts a new song.

Amidst the growing crop the Reddis tie branches of *Semecarpus Anacardium* to bamboo-poles and plant them in the field or hang the bleached skulls of cattle on stakes to avert the Evil Eye. They believe, that these devices detract the eyes of passers-by whose envy of the growing crops might harm their prosperity.

By November the rice is golden and harvesting begins, but jawari-millet, specially *konda zonna,* grown on flat fields ripens much later, and the white jawari sown in the autumn is not reaped until January. Jawari grows five to twelve feet high and at harvest time the men first cut the stalks near the ground, and throw them aside in bundles; then the women cut off the ears with small knives and collect them in baskets; the stalks are stacked and used as fodder.

Those men who have much grain use bullocks for threshing. The ears are spread on a dung-plastered threshing ground near the fields, generally in the shade of a tree, and the bullocks, yoked to a revolving beam, driven through the grain. But people with small crops often thrash with sticks. The grain is winnowed in the usual Telugu manner, being poured from a winnowing fan held high above the head, so that the wind carries off the husks.

When the crops on the flat fields have been harvested each householder sacrifices a chicken, or when he is rich a goat, but never a pig for Bhumi Devata; he collects all the grain into a mound, and salutes the earth goddess. The harvest is then brought home in baskets, which are stored in the attic, the grain being covered with a layer of ash. Some Reddis, who harvest a fair amount of grain, store it in the ground, the holes being feathered with chaff and covered over with stalks, earth and stones; but I do not think this is very usual. It is only a few Teluguized Reddis in villages with mixed populations, such as Kondamodalu below the gorges who store their harvest in raised wattle grain-bins close to the house.

I have mentioned already that the rice-fields are not irrigated, but that the crop is entirely dependent on rainfall; this is true of the vast majority of Reddi villages in the Godavari Region. Here the rice is broadcast, like any other crop, and not transplanted. In some of the hill valleys north of the Pamuleru River, however, a few men cultivate rice on irrigated fields close to perennial streams, the seedlings being raised in dammed-up nurseries and transplanted into ploughed and puddled fields. The origin of this wet-rice cultivation in the hills, which is intimately connected with the *muttadar* system, will have to be discussed in a later chapter.

We have seen that the system of land tenure in those villages where *podu* is the only form of cultivation is of the greatest simplicity. There the land is common village-property and no lasting private rights are recognized. This is not the case where permanent cultivation on flat fields has multiplied the value of certain individual plots of land. These have become the personal property of the cultivator, and though at first sight the recognition of such proprietorship might be considered a deviation from the old order, it is by no means inconsistent with the original Reddi idea of land-tenure. For it has always been the Reddi's undisputed right to cultivate any portion of the village land for as long as he can raise a crop on it, and it is only when he relinquishes the land, that it reverts to the communal ownership of the village. In *podu*-cultivation the abandonment of fields is a normal and recurrent process, and no individual rights in land therefore endure, but when new methods instituted permanent cultivation and a field was no longer surrendered after several years' occupation, the conception of individual ownership in land grew logically out of the older system. Even the inheritance of land is not altogether a novel concept, for a newly prepared *podu*-field was always taken over by the cultivator's sons or brothers in the case of his sudden decease.

Permanent fields like *podu*-fields, are sometimes cultivated in partnership by two or more families, who share the yield after the harvest. Thus the *patel* of Koinda, Vinel Bhimreddi, and his six brothers cultivate all their flat land jointly; four of the brothers live in Koinda and three in Talagundi, a small settlement of their own. They are all men past the prime of life and have grown up children; some of them possess bullocks and some of them do not, but they all work according to their individual capacity on their common land, pooling their resources to pay the land-revenue and sharing the crops equally. Apart from the flat lands each brother has his own hill-field, which he cultivates individually.

Joint cultivation of flat land is not confined to brothers or close relations. It seems to appeal to the Reddis' mentality, and where the system of taxation favours communal working it is readily instituted. In Tumileru, a village on the left bank of the Godavari, the village community as a whole pays a bulk assessment of Rs. 200, and here the Reddis cultivate the flat land in groups of four or five. The grain as well as the tax is distributed according to the number of ploughs which each party contributes. Perhaps the old idea of the communal ownership of land encourages such a development.

It is only when we come to the buying, selling and hiring of land, that we are faced with an entirely new element in Reddi land tenure and one which has had profound repercussions in the social sphere. Therein lies the germ of a new order, for the possibility of marketing privately owned land not only gives rise to the distinction between rich

and poor, but empowers the individual to alienate parts of the village land to outsiders.

### *Garden Crops.*

Besides the cultivation of grain crops most Reddis, whether living in the hills or in the lowlands raise a certain amount of garden crops, such as tobacco, chillies, maize, taro, yams, roselle, beans, brinjals, marrows and cucumbers. Where the soil in the village is suitable small fenced-in gardens (*totum*) are attached to some of the houses, but in the larger plains settlements special plots for these crops are often set aside in the fields. Taro, of which both roots and leaves are eaten, yams, marrows and cucumbers are generally grown only in small quantities, but the patches for tobacco, chillies and brinjals, raised in seedling-beds and then transplanted, are sometimes fairly extensive. The Reddis living on the Godavari plant tobacco on the banks of alluvial soil which is deposited by the river during the rains. In November, when the waters recede, these banks are fenced off and ploughed or dug over (Fig. 43) and the tobacco seedlings are planted out in rows and regularly watered. Maize is grown both in fields amongst the other crops and in gardens; some of the cobs are plucked while still tender and eaten roasted or boiled, but others are allowed to ripen and are made into flour, which is used for gruel or bread.

Beans, and particularly a variety with large black seeds, are frequently grown on poles near the houses and close to field platforms. They are never eaten fresh, but dried for at least a month before they are boiled whole in gruel or curry. Many Reddis grow domesticated varieties of taro and yams, but both these tubers occur also wild in the jungle. I am not in a position to say whether the cultivated variety can have been derived from the wild one, but the Reddis differentiate between the two and consider the wild varieties inferior in taste.

All these vegetables, however, only supplement the diet of grain, sago and jungle produce, and few Reddis grow even sufficient chillies and tobacco to cover their own needs throughout the year. But castor is grown for sale, both in the Northern Hills and in the alluvial soil of the Godavari banks.

Many Reddis plant trees near their houses and field huts, but they do not understand how to take cuttings, and raise such fruit-bearing trees as mango, tamarind, lime, orange, guava and jack-fruit from seed, protecting the young shoots and even the saplings with upturned baskets or wattle screens. These trees become the individual property of the man who planted them, and are inherited by his descendants.

A special form of horticulture has been developed by the Reddis in the higher valleys of the Chodavaram and Ellavaram Taluqs, particularly those north of the Pamuleru River. Here the cultivation of oranges, limes, and sweet limes was introduced approximately two or

three generations ago, and so suitable are both climate and soil that the yield is plentiful and the fruit of excellent quality. The trees are planted in groves, generally near perennial streams, and are protected and regularly watered when young. A small percentage of the fruit is consumed by the Reddis themselves, but the largest part is exported to the markets of the plains. Though in themselves a boon for the Reddis, these gardens have not proved an undiluted blessing, for the value of the fruit has attracted traders and settlers from the plains and many orange groves have already passed into the hands of outsiders, who easily outwit the simple hill-men.[1]

*Domestic Animals*

The further a village lies in the interior of the hills, the smaller is the number of live-stock, and it is mainly in the villages most closely associated with plains populations that considerable herds of cattle are kept.

Those Reddis, who have either flat fields or are engaged in forest-labour, employ oxen and buffaloes both for ploughing and for the transport of timber and bamboo, and in the Northern Hills, some Reddis have followed the example of Mala traders, and keep bullocks as pack-animals. Milk of both cows and buffaloes seems to be regarded as an incidental advantage and not as the primary object of cattle-breeding, and in many a village Reddis do not milk their cattle, asserting that the calves would suffer if deprived of the milk. Nor are the Reddis in the habit of making ghee[2] or curd, and even in the most Teluguized villages they do not use ghee for cooking or for dressing the hair. In their avoidance of beef and buffalo-meat they are as strict as any Hindu, and regard this abstention as a sign of their social superiority over Koyas.

Reddi cattle subsists almost entirely on forest grazing. But after the harvest the animals are driven into the *podu*-fields to browse on the stalks still standing, and it is only during the driest months that they are occasionally fed with jawari-straw gathered from permanent fields. Most cattle-owners tether their animals to forked posts in front of their dwellings; byres are seldom built, but a man will sometimes stall his cattle in an old disused house. Young boys and sometimes old women tend the village-cattle during the day, driving it down to the river or stream morning and evening, and grazing it in the forest.

It would appear that originally cattle-breeding had no place in Reddi culture, and this assumption is borne out by three factors: *podu*-cultivators do not require draught and pack animals, which only become necessary with the adoption of plough cultivation, trade enterprises or forest-labour; even to-day very little use is made of milk and its bye-

1. Cf. p. 248.

2. Clarified butter, the favourite cooking fat of most Indians.

products; oxen and buffaloes play no role in ritual or ceremonial and in this respect the Reddis differ greatly from Koyas, Gonds, Porajas, and Gadabas, who consider oxen as the supreme sacrificial animals. There is, moreover, no rite or ceremony aimed at assuring their cattle's well-being and safety.

The position of goats is somewhat different from that of cattle. They are not kept in large numbers, but are proffered to the gods at various ceremonies, and their meat is readily eaten by all Reddis. Occasionally goats are milked, but it seems that here again the supply of milk is considered of only secondary importance. Although their use as sacrificial animals suggests an older association than buffaloes or oxen, we shall see in Chapter X that it is not the old agricultural rites, but the newer cults particularly those also practised by non-aboriginal populations which require goat sacrifices.

Pigs, on the other hand, must represent a very old element in Reddi culture. It is a pig that is sacrificed to Bhumi Devata, the earth goddess, at the first sowing, and its blood is believed to fertilize the seed grain. Again at the Mamidi Panduga, the greatest feast of the year, the sacrifice of a pig is the main feature of the rite. Many Reddis keep pigs and they say that they prefer pork to any other meat. They certainly lavish more attention on their pigs than on other domestic animals, and house them in rectangular sties of stockading with thatched roofs and drop-gates. They feed their pigs with chaff and kitchen-refuse and often give them the water in which grain has been cooked; small log-troughs (*toti*) outside the sties are daily filled with water (Fig. 26). The Reddis call their pigs, though they seldom call other domestic animals, with the words '*da gundi*' 'come pig.' During the day pigs roam about scavenging the village and the near-by jungle, and at night they are shut into their sties.

Considering how firmly pig-breeding and pig-sacrifice are established in Reddi culture, it is surprising to find a whole group of Reddis who do not keep pigs and are scornful of eating pork. Throughout the country north and north-west of Bodlanka, and as far as the Sileru River, no pig is to be found, and these Reddis say that they do not eat pork. Consequently the sacrifice of a chicken takes the place of pig-sacrifices during the rites for the propitiation of the earth-goddess. In all the neighbouring villages to the south and those north-west of the Sileru, pigs are regularly sacrificed and eagerly eaten, though in some places pigs are not kept, but bought for the feasts. How can we then account for their absence in that particular isolated group? I believe that the explanation is to be found in the influence of men of Jangam caste, who came in from the east as the *guru*[1] of certain *muttadar* and have extended their influence over the Hill Reddis. Jangams themselves are debarred by caste rules from eating pork, and

1. Religious teacher, (cf. p. 252).

it is understandable that they object to so ' unclean ' an animal as the pig, whose flesh is eaten only by the lowest classes of Hindu society.

The Reddis know the value of castration and geld boars by cutting out the testicles with a knife; but in each village at least one boar is left uncastrated. Bulls they castrate by crushing the testicles between stones.

Not the least important of the Reddi's domestic animals are fowls. In nearly all ceremonies and religious rites the sacrifice of chickens is indispensable and there is no deity to whom chickens are not acceptable; eggs, though sometimes eaten, are never offered to the gods. Chickens are thrown the chaff from the pounding trough and sometimes a handful of grain, but usually they find their food in the jungle and on the rubbish heap. At night they sleep inside the houses under the roof, and some people hang up baskets as nests for broody hens. In the Rampa country and in the Godavari villages below the gorges the fowls are of a large, fine breed. Cock-fighting is a favourite entertainment among the local Telugu-folks and some Reddis have taken to this sport.

Dogs are of the usual pariah breed and are sometimes used for hunting; they receive little care from their masters and very seldom food. But if a Reddi catches a young wild animal, a monkey or a deer, he will take a good deal of trouble to rear and tame it as a pet.

With the transition to plough-cultivation domestic animals have recently gained in importance and become virtually a necessity for the Reddi. But where he persists in the hills in his old mode of life, the breeding of pigs, goats and poultry is a side-line that provides him now and then with the meat for a feast, but plays otherwise only an insignificant role in his system of food-production.

## CHAPTER VII.

# FOOD-CONSUMPTION

ALL the Reddi's activities are centred in the food-quest. Though he has risen above the state of the primitive collector and hunter who may never relax his efforts in gathering food even for a day, the Reddi's economy is not sufficiently developed to leave him much leisure or energy for unproductive occupations.

Co-operation in the production and the gathering of food is one of the main links of social cohesion within the family and to a lesser degree within the village-community. But co-operation does not cease with material achievement; the social significance of food is not only manifested by co-operation in the various stages of its acquisition, the slaying of an animal in the chase or the raising of crops on the fields, but also in its communal consumption: the distribution, sharing, exchanging and preparation of food are closely woven into the pattern of Reddi social life.

As in the production of food, so in its consumption, the family is the most important unit. Quite apart from the nutritional relationship between mother and suckling child, most of the alimentary needs of the growing as well as the adult are satisfied within the circle of the family and the common preparation and eating of food is a more essential characteristic of the 'household' than the common habitation which may be shared by two or more families, each constituting a separate unit. The members of a family not only produce their food-supply by joint action and a well defined division of labour, but they also consume it together, sharing equally whatever is at hand.

The unit of production and the unit of consumption do not, however, always coincide. Two families may cultivate jointly, but they divide the crops after harvest and store the grain separately. Here the producing unit is evidently larger than the consuming unit, but on the other hand the custom of presenting small quantities of new grain to relatives when visiting other villages, evinces a tendency to extend the consuming group beyond the limits of the producing group. The Reddis' liberal hospitality is yet another aspect of this tendency and guests from neighbouring villages are often put up and entertained for several days, being given as a matter of course an ample share in the family's food however modest the fare. Hospitality is, indeed, considered the principal virtue in both men and women, and is the first quality whereby a Reddi judges his neighbour. The hospitality due to a wife's relatives

is one of the main themes of the marriage-sermon which accompanies the handing over of the bride to the bridegroom.

The custom of sharing game and the meat of domestic animals is yet another example of overlapping of food-producing and food-consuming units; when out hunting the men of a village bring down an animal, they distribute the meat in equal shares among all the households of the settlement. It is true that if the animal is killed far from the village, the hunters cook and eat some of the meat on the spot, but whatever they bring home is distributed among the whole community. It is not prepared in common and eaten at a general feast, but each man hands his share over to his wife, who cooks it together with the family's ordinary food. If there is a visitor in the village, when the kill is made he also receives his share and he is perfectly entitled to take it back to his own village. The carving-up of an animal is done with meticulous care. To ensure perfect equality the carcass is cut up in front of the assembled community and each part of the animal—meat, bones, skin, head and intestines—is divided into as many shares as there are households.

A lone hunter will also share the kill with the other villagers; but he may retain a special portion for himself and a man who owns a muzzle-loader and frequently provides the community with game may be given a little grain after harvest in recognition of his services.

Domestic pigs and goats are seldom slaughtered except for sacrifice or in payment of a fine. At public ceremonies the price of the animal is usually raised by subscription and on such occasions the whole of the meat is cooked by the men and consumed by all members of the community at the subsequent feast. Chickens proffered to the gods are, however, usually eaten by the sacrificer's family, by the *pujari,* if he made the offering on behalf of the community or by the magician (*veju*) if he advised the sacrifice to avert evil or disease.

There is a marked difference in the treatment of meat and vegetable produce; meat is almost invariably shared between all members of the community, while a sharing of grain, vegetables or fruit with persons outside the household is an occasional occurrence, and constitutes an act of hospitality or a mark of particular friendship. The explanation for this difference in attitude is perhaps the perishable quality of meat. The Reddis do not know how to preserve meat by drying and though they sometimes buy dried fish in a bazaar they eat fresh all the fish which they catch themselves.

In every day life there are no social groupings, that cut across the individual households as regular food-consuming units. Neither men nor women, nor the unmarried of either sex are accustomed to segregate themselves from the ordinary household group to prepare and eat their meals apart, and in this respect the Reddis differ markedly from tribes with age-groups, boys and girls' dormitories, men's societies, and other

features of a more complex social organization.

At feasts and ceremonies, however, all households of a village, and often a large number of visitors, join in a common meal; at domestic ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals, the food is provided by an individual family, but at public ceremonials every man contributes according to his means. Though cooking is woman's work, on ceremonial occasions men usually cook the meat in one large pot and sometimes they even prepare dal-curry. The preparation of millet or rice is usually left to the women, and at the annual feasts all women cook their contributions of grain in their own houses and then pool them for the common meal. The visitors are served first by the men of the village, who eat after their guests have finished, but though the sexes keep more or less apart, the smaller children eating with the women, there is no strict segregation, nor do men or women enjoy privileges in the serving of the food.

The social importance of food among the Reddis cannot easily be exaggerated. We have mentioned already that liberality in the provisioning of the guest is the most highly prized virtue, and it seems, indeed, that in a woman even easy morals arouse less criticism than failure in her duties of hospitality. A 'bad' wife was always described to me as a woman who neglects her husband's guests, while one who betrays him soon regains public respect if she succeeds in establishing a reputation for hospitality in her new home.

Public condonation of social crimes is signified by the community's participation in a feast provided at the expense of the culprit, and the communal eating of food is the symbol of group-solidarity. The man or woman guilty of a violation of customary law, and therefore at variance with the rest of community, is debarred from sharing other people's meals. Socially, eating together is considered in much the same light as sexual congress; the acceptance of cooked food at the hands of a person of lower caste, like sexual intercourse with such a person defiles the Reddi and necessitates a purification ceremony. Food is, in the Reddi's mind, the main medium whereby defilement or impurity is transmitted, and this sentiment is reflected in the taboo that forbids women to cook during menstruation and after childbirth, and prevents excommunicated members of the tribe as well as people of lower caste from entering a cooking room.

Taboos and regulations restricting the kinds of food that may be consumed under specific circumstances are comparatively few. The most important is the taboo on the eating of fruits and crops before the performance of the relevant first-fruit ceremony; and this applies equally to all members of the community and is upheld by supernatural sanction. Though Reddis do not eat monkeys, bears and snakes, there is no formal taboo to enforce this abstention, and it is only the eating

of beef which constitutes a grave breach of tribal law and is punished by excommunication.

Men and women, adults and children may all eat the same food, and even pregnant women are not subjected to any restriction of diet. Nor are *pujari* and magicians obliged to observe any particular food taboos, but a *pujari* must fast on the days of the annual festivals till he has performed the sacrificial rites and offered food to the gods.

Food, both cooked and uncooked, constitutes the principal offerings to the gods and the Departed. Almost any food is considered acceptable, but the choice of sacrificial animals depends on the occasion and on the deity to be propitiated. In Chapter X we will see the great role which consecrated food plays in religion and ritual.

Sacrificial food is generally, though not invariably, cooked by men; in everyday life, however, the preparation and cooking of all food falls to the lot of the women, but a man may cook during his wife's period or after the birth of her child.

Ripe fruit, berries, cucumbers, and young, tender maize are eaten raw, and children sometimes even nibble raw mushrooms. All other food is either roasted, stewed or made into gruel; frying in any kind of fat is not practised.

Roasting on an open fire is the favourite way of preparing rats, mice, squirrels, small birds and lizards, which are impaled on bamboo sticks and toasted over the flames. Maize cobs, certain roots, mushrooms, and crabs may be roasted in the hot ashes, but this method is used rather in preparing an occasional relish than in cooking a regular meal. Meat, fish and most vegetables are cooked in a highly spiced stew called *kura*. Marrows, cucumbers, beans, taro, yams, wild roots, bamboo shoots, mushrooms and jungle leaves, as well as unripe fruits, such as mangoes and jack-fruits, are sliced with a small curved knife (Fig. 45) and boiled in water with salt and, if available, onions or such pounded spices as chillies, turmeric, roselle or tamarind. When serving meat stewed in this way the liquid is strained off and served separately. Pulses are sometimes included in the stew ingredients and greatly improve the consistency of the gravy.

Though a stew may be eaten alone, the Reddi prefers to eat it together with grain, small millets, jawari, maize or rice. For this purpose the husked grain is boiled whole in salted water, but jawari and maize are sometimes broken under the pounding pestle before boiling.

The most economical and the most usual fare in a Reddi household is, however *jawa*, a kind of gruel. It is made of flour, produced either from grain, pulses, sago-pith, dried mango-kernels or dried mushrooms, and a few handfuls cooked in a large pot of water provide a meal for a whole family. To vary the taste of gruel the Reddis often mix two or three varieties of flour together seasoning it with salt and

FIG. 45. Divitamma of Dornalpushe slicing bamboo-shoots.

FIG. 46. Lachmaya of Parantapalli ladling gruel into a leaf-cup.

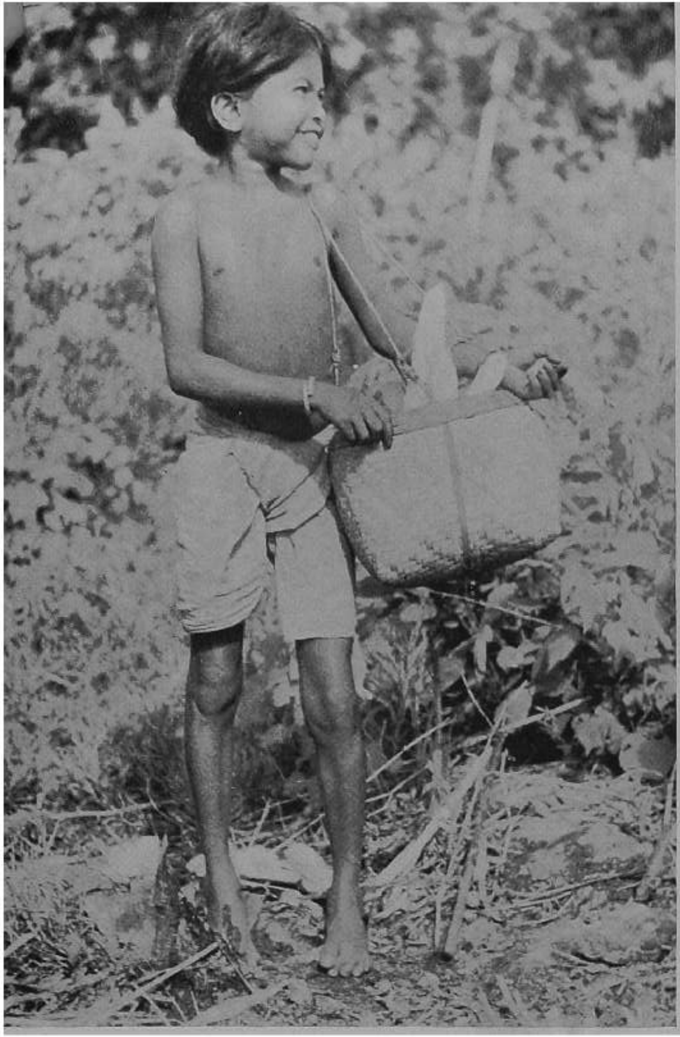


FIG. 47. Bringing home the day's supply of bamboo-shoots.

FIG. 48. A boy with his toy-bow.

spices, and sometimes adding a few vegetables or unripe fruits. But in general *jawa* is a thickish brown soup, insipid and sticky, which must be served out with deep-bowled ladles (Fig. 46); it is a beverage to be drunk, not a food to be eaten with the hands, and it can be conveniently carried to the field or jungle in gourd-bottles. Considered on the whole inferior to boiled grain and stew, gruel is never served at feasts.

Sometimes the Reddis make flour into small cakes or unleavened bread. Any of the coarsely ground flours used in the preparation of gruel is moistened with water and seasoned with salt or chillies or turmeric and small lumps of the dough are flattened between the palms and then wrapt in large leaves and baked in an open potsherd. The bread thus prepared is about ½ inch thick and rather sticky. It is not a regular item of diet, but is only made for weddings and domestic ceremonies or as a treat for children.

Earthen pots are used for cooking both daily meals and ceremonial feasts, but the Reddis know an alternative method of stewing which in former times may have been more generally employed. Out hunting and finding themselves far from home, they will cut a section of a large green bamboo culm, and stuff into it whatsoever meat, grain or vegetables are to hand. The bamboo culm is then placed over a slow fire and the contents stewed in the oozing sap.

Normally the Reddi eats two meals a day, one between 9 and 10 a.m., (*poddina bozenam*) and one soon after nightfall (*poddupai bozenam*). A man going early to his fields often works several hours on an empty stomach, before he returns for his morning meal or has it brought out by his wife. As a rule the Reddi eats gruel in the morning and boiled grain with stew in the evening, but there is no general custom in this respect, and he may equally well reverse his menu. In times of scarcity he has gruel twice and in extreme cases only once a day.

Variety is provided not so much by different ways of preparing the food as by the food-stuffs becoming available with the progress of the seasons. Green vegetables and jungle produce are most plentiful and tasty during the rains, and at that time the Reddi's diet is brightened by the prolific growth of mushrooms. In the cool season most Reddis harvest a new variety of crop every two months or so and are thus comparatively well supplied with grain, but their store usually runs low towards the end of the hot weather and then they eke it out with wild roots and tubers, sago-pith, and pounded mango kernels. In those months, when the jungle growth is withered, unripe mangoes prepared as vegetable make up for the lack of greens and herbs, and gruel made from sago-pith is in many villages the staple diet.

Meat, the most highly prized of all foods, forms to-day only an insignificant part of the Reddi's diet, and I would say that the average

Reddi does not eat meat more than ten times a year. Fish on the other hand forms a regular item in the fare of the Godavari Reddi. The practical Reddi seldom eats eggs, for he considers an egg eaten a chicken lost, and since chickens are indispensable as offerings to the gods every available opportunity is taken to hatch them.

Taken as a whole the Reddi's diet appears to be better balanced in the hills than in the large villages on the Godavari banks. For the *podu*-cutting Reddi subsists largely on the wild fruits and plants of the jungle, and his diet seems to be a fairly satisfactory combination of fresh vegetables, rich in vitamins, and carbohydrates in the form of grain. In the large river-bank settlements, on the other hand, he devotes little time to collecting wild produce, raises fewer garden crops, and lives mainly on the grain received as wages and grown on level fields; consequently his diet is overloaded with starch. The better health of the people in the hills is probably due to this circumstance, and it is particularly noticeable that the Reddis in the Godavari villages suffer far more from yaws than their less advanced kinsmen in the jungle. All Reddis are, however, short of protein, and as forest and game-laws restrict hunting and the contact with high caste Hindus leads them to replace the sacrifice of animals by the offering of coconuts there will be fewer and fewer occasions for eating meat.

# PART III

# ADAPTATION TO THE CULTURAL MILIEU

## CHAPTER VIII.

# PHASES OF LIFE.

BEFORE turning to those aspects of Reddi culture in which contacts with neighbouring populations have produced the most consequential changes and the divergence between the various groups of the tribe subject to different environmental influences is greatest, let us outline the main phases of the Reddi's private life. In so far as these have no direct bearing on the principal theme of the book, the effects of culture-contact in the economic and social field, they are described but briefly and I have not discussed such subjects as the mental development and the education of children, or the psychological relationship of the sexes.

### *Childbirth*

The birth of a child is, under normal circumstances, no concern of anyone outside the narrow circle of the family. Unlike the other crises of human life, such as marriage or death, it calls for no action on the part of the community and is unaccompanied by ceremonial.

Reddis are fully aware of the causal nexus between sexual intercourse and conception; and most women seem to consider that pregnancy lasts for nine or ten lunar months. An old woman told me that a girl child is born after nine months, while ten months elapse before a boy is born. She said that no mother can predict the sex of the child in her womb, but that sometimes towards the end of pregnancy a *veju* is called who, in consultation with supernatural powers, is able to disclose the sex of the unborn child. The Reddis have great faith in such prophesies: "*Veju* are all alike," said Gurgunta Chinnaya of Gogulapudi, "half of what they say is true and half is lies; but they never err, when they tell whether a child will be a boy or a girl." This man, who incidentally has six children, was of the opinion that pregnancy lasts four or five months, and it seems indeed, that men as a whole have little idea about the duration of pregnancy. Many a married man earnestly assured me that he had never kept count of the months; only when his wife told him of her condition, did he know she was pregnant and soon afterwards her belly began to swell. If we consider the taboos which a Reddi woman must observe during every menstruation, such ignorance, or perhaps rather indifference on the part of the men is rather surprising.

During pregnancy, until the day of confinement, a woman con-

tinues her usual life. Nothing stands in the way of her full participation in ceremonies and festivities, and unless she is physically ailing there is in the Reddis' mind no reason why she should not carry out even the most strenuous tasks such as the hour-long pounding of sago, or the weeding of the fields. I remember seeing a young girl who any day expected her first child, fetching water from the river, time after time carrying the heavy pots up the steep Godavari bank to the village. There are no food taboos which an expectant mother must observe but she is warned not to undertake long excursions or roam in dense jungle lest a *konda devata*, a hill deity, may harm her; and she is strictly forbidden to enter a boat or cross, in any other way, the Godavari.[1] Otherwise custom imposes no restrictions on her activities.

Intercourse during pregnancy seems to be purely a matter of personal inclination. Many a man sleeps with his wife until she is confined, but others say that some women do not like to cohabit in the last months before the birth of a child. Neither attitude seems to spring from a belief in the effect that coition might have on the unborn child.

What is the Reddis attitude towards child-bearing? Normally women want children, but in the Godavari villages some women get discouraged if many of their own or their neighbours' children die. " What is the use of all the trouble," was Madi Zogreddi's comment, " that is what some women think; then they go to a *veju* and get leaf-medicine to mix with their food so that they shall have no more children." Some *veju* also know of a recipe which procures abortion; this expedient is hardly ever used by married women and to hush up the intrigue of an unmarried girl there is the far easier method of a quick marriage to still the neighbours tongues. Sometimes however a miscarriage is brought on for purely medical reasons. Pandama the young wife of Patla Gangaya (Gogulapudi House 5) was continuously ill during her first pregnancy and when in the fourth month her condition became serious her husband called a *veju* to diagnose the cause of the trouble. The *veju* discovered that a *konda devata* wanted to kill the unborn child and that as long it remained in the womb, the mother would be in great danger; the only way of saving Pandama's life, was to procure an abortion. He brought some leaves,[2] prepared a concoction and made the girl drink it. This was in the morning and in the early afternoon she had a miscarriage, and was soon restored to perfect health. The fœtus was treated in the same way as a still-born child and buried in the jungle without ceremony.

A woman is confined in the house in which she lives; a corner is screened off and there she retires at the first pangs of labour. Except

1. The custom that a pregnant woman should not cross a river prevails also among the aboriginal tribes of Middle India; cf. Verrier Elwin, *Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills*, Journ. Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. IX, 1943, p. 117.

2. Golla Lachmaya, the *veju* in question refused to tell me what leaves he had used; he pretended that he had received them from another *veju*.

for the scanty protection of the hastily erected wattle-screen, there is little privacy during confinement, for the other inmates use the house as usual and are not even debarred from cooking or eating there. Nor should we be right in supposing that the woman in childbed suffers from this lack of seclusion.

If the couple resides in the husband's village his mother or any of his other near female relatives will assist at the birth, but if they live in the wife's village her own mother or a mother's sister is present. In some villages there is an elderly woman, who is particularly skilful in the care of parturient women and is called in at every confinement; she is rewarded for her services with some measures of grain or As. 8 in cash, but there are no professional midwives who practise outside their own village. Gongul Virama (Gogulapudi House 3), who assists at all confinements in Gogulapudi, told me that she knew of no medicine to speed delivery or relieve pain and that if labour is protracted only a *veju* can help. This tallied with the information I was given in the large villages on the Godavari, where in cases of difficult delivery a messenger is sent for a *veju* or magician, who may be either a man or a woman. When the *veju* arrives he proceeds to diagnose the cause of the trouble; he burns a little incense, then takes some ashes from the hearth and, holding them in the right hand, he describes a circle round his head; gazing at the ashes, as he pours them through his fingers into his left hand, he falls into a trance[1] and in this state he is able to recognise the deity or spirit who has afflicted the woman in labour. In pronouncing the name of the deity responsible he rubs the ashes used in divination on the patient's forehead and her relatives make reverences to the deity and promise the sacrifice of a chicken and an offering of food if the woman is safely delivered. As soon as the woman has recovered the *veju* makes the offering, as it was promised either in the house or the jungle.

It is not considered unlucky for a woman to give birth to a child while in the fields or in the forest.

As soon as a child is born the woman in attendance cuts the navel string, either with a knife or a sharpened bamboo, and sprinkles the child with a little cold water. Only next morning she washes it with warm water. The afterbirth is put into an old pot and buried in a deep hole in the jungle by any man or woman of the family, while the navel-string when it falls is buried separately by either the midwife, the father or the mother of the child.

If a woman dies in childbed she is buried or burnt with ordinary rites, but a still-born child is buried anywhere in the jungle without ceremony.

Two or three days after confinement a woman is given the bark of the *jalbu* tree to chew and this, it is believed, prevents fever or pain;

1. There are also other methods of diagnosis, some of which are described in Chapter X, p. 234.

she is also given special food, which is usually jawari broken and boiled, salt being roasted and mixed with the grain. If a mother has difficulty in nourishing her child she stimulates the flow of milk by eating the raw root of a creeper, called *pala dumpa,* which is not eaten on other occasions. It is generally believed that after the birth of a girl the mother grows plump, but that if the child is a boy, she becomes lean and skinny.

During his wife's confinement the husband should stay near the house, but it is not considered unlucky if he happens to be absent from house. In the Godavari villages he is not supposed to go to work on his fields or in the jungle for one month after the child is born but should do the housework, fetch water and cook. However, this taboo on work on the fields is not always strictly observed, for if a birth occurs at a time when there is urgent work, at sowing time or when the crops must be reaped, the husband may attend to his fields and arrange for some woman to look after his wife and cook for her. The Reddis in the hills to the south do not observe this custom, however, nor does it seem prevalent in the Northern Hills. Boli Kanaya, who had recently emigrated from Siddharam near the Godavari to Gogulapudi, said that while in Siddharam he had complied with the customary restrictions on his movements, he saw no reason to do so in Gogulapudi, where no one else observed this taboo.

After delivery a woman is considered impure; among the Reddis of the remoter hill-villages this period of ceremonial uncleanliness lasts only four or five days, but among those in contact with Hindu populations it extends over a full month. In any case it is only during the first few days that the mother is bathed daily by the woman in attendance, who also washes her clothes. For these services she usually receives a small gift of grain or cash, but if the father of the new-born child is prosperous, he may present her with a sari when she returns to her own house.

At the end of the period of impurity, whether it has lasted four or five days or one month, a domestic ceremony is performed: first the mother replasters the floor of the house, bathes in a stream, washes her clothes and then cooks food for the first time after her confinement. If a chicken is at hand it will be killed, but otherwise ordinary food, such as millet and dal and perhaps roots or marrow, suffices for the ceremonial meal to which some of the couples' nearest relations are invited. Before the meal a small part of the food is set aside on a leaf-plate for the Departed. From that day on the mother is allowed to cook again and resumes her ordinary tasks in house and field.

Unlike Chenchu fathers, who delight in fondling their offspring, Reddi men seem to take comparatively little notice of their babies; it is only when a child is two or three that the father will carry it about or sit with it in his lap. Women seem to be equally pleased with boys

and girls, but men prefer sons to daughters: "Till we die, they will help us," they say, "but girls are soon carried away." Twins are bringers of good fortune, and I was told of one couple in Mautagudem who had prospered ever since the birth of their twins. There is a strong belief that twins should never be separated; "they were born together and should live together," it is said, "girls should marry the same man or two brothers, and boys should take sisters as wives."

Reddi families are as a rule not very large, and I would say that women with more than four or five children are in the minority; there are many who have never born more than two. Sterility seems to be a fairly frequent affliction, and the barrenness of a wife is considered sufficient ground for either divorce or the taking of a second wife. The Reddis seem to know of no medicine to combat natural sterility. But when sterility is believed to be the effect of black magic the victim seeks the help of a *veju,* hoping to annul the spell of one *veju* by that of another. A barren woman is sometimes described as *godu* which means literally 'bullock'; it is a scornful term, and is considered much more abusive than such expressions as 'daughter of a whore' or 'child of an ass,' Telugu swear-words which, though used by Reddis, have for them very little meaning.

It will be noticed that all the three genealogies given in Appendix II contain cases of sterile marriages, and several occur in the village house-lists (Appendix I). Once again we may take the village of Gogulapudi as an example of an average Reddi community in the hills; a glance at the village-list shows that the total number of children born to twenty women is fifty-nine. If we consider all married women occurring in the house-list, including deceased wives of householders, the average number of children born is 2.9 and surviving 1.8 per head. Reckoning only those women past child-bearing age and those deceased, we come to an average of 3.7 children born, and 1.9 children surviving, which, if this can be taken as a general phenomenon, means that the tribe is slightly decreasing in numbers, and indeed this tallies with my own impression. The house-lists of Parantapalli and Kakishnur tell a similar tale, although these are not quite as reliable as that of Gogulapudi, for children who died in infancy may here and there have remained unrecorded.

A comparison of the census figures of 1931 and 1941 is unfortunately not possible, since in 1931 the Hill Reddis were not recorded separately.

### *Name-giving and Childhood*

There is no general rule as to when a child should be given its name. In the Godavari Region one finds children of six months, who have as yet no name, but the Reddis in the Northern Hills hold the name-giving ceremony usually eight days after birth, that is at a time

when the mother may still be ceremonially impure. A few relations gather in the parents' house and another woman of the family cooks some food, some of which the father puts on a leaf and offers to the spirits of the dead. He then touches the child's feet with his lips and announces the name by which it will be called. Then he eats a small part of the consecrated food and distributes the rest among those present. A meal concludes this domestic ceremony, which is attended only by the closest blood relations of the parents and any other inmates of the house.

Slightly different are the name-giving ceremonies in the Godavari Region. Boli Kanaya of Gogulapudi, whose wife gave birth to her third child in June, said that he would combine the name-giving with the *zonna kotta,* the first-eating ceremony for the great millet, which is seldom held before November. He would go to a market and buy some coconut and jaggery, and if he had enough money, he would also buy a new sari for his wife and a small cloth for the child. When he came back he himself would cook a large quantity of millet and since it was the first-eating ceremony he would use a new hearth and a new pot. Then he would spread some large leaves on a newly cleaned part of the house-floor, eight to the right for his own deceased relations and five to the left for those of his wife. He would then place little heaps of cooked millet on each leaf and on a separate leaf he would put jaggery. As he broke the coconut he would say:

| | |
|---|---|
| We offer you coconuts, sugar and cooked food; oh god, mother, oh ancestors, protect us! | *Niku kobari kai, belam, buva pettenam; sami, talli, peddalu kachi kapadavale dandam!* |

Then taking a chicken and holding it in front of some grain he would enumerate all the names he could think of; the child would be given the name that coincided with the first peck. Finally he would kill and prepare the chicken, and all the assembled relatives would eat the millet and the chicken curry.

Should a child fall ill soon after the name-giving, a *veju* is consulted, who may discover that a name does not agree with the child. Then a boy may be given the name of his paternal grandfather, and a girl that of her grandmother; but the Reddis do not believe that the souls of departed relatives can be reborn in children.

Characteristics, such as colour of skin or traits of character, give rise to nicknames, and these generally precede the proper name. Boli Komaya of Gogulapudi is called Erra Komaya because his skin has a reddish tinge, Gongul Virama is known as Gadidu, because of her curly hair, and Buzar Kanaya of Kakishnur as Ponkala Kanaya because he tells so many lies.

Weaning is marked by no ceremony, and although children are given their first solid food when they are about ten months old, the mother will often continue to suckle her child until it is about four

or five years old. The piercing of the ears takes place between the ages of four or six. The nearest relations are invited, some grain is boiled and the father kills a chicken and sprinkles some of the blood on the grain. Then the chicken is cooked and a part of the ceremonial fare is offered to the Departed. When guests and hosts have finished the meal, father or mother pierce the child's ears and nostrils, and in the case of a girl also the septum of the nose with a thorn, a brass wire or a needle. Brass wire or small plugs of wood are inserted into the holes and constantly twisted to prevent them from closing. The piercing of ears and nose is not always an occasion for a domestic ceremony. The people of Gogulapudi, for instance, take their children to a bazaar and have the operation performed by a silversmith, or they wait till an itinerant silversmith visits their village.

Very soon children take part in the economic life of the adults, little girls accompany their mothers to the stream, fetch water in small pots, wash their clothes, collect edible herbs, fruits and mushrooms, and prepare food for cooking while boys are mainly entrusted with tending cattle; in the large lowland villages one can often see a group of boys, the eldest about twelve and the smallest five or six, driving a large herd of oxen and buffaloes to the jungle. There they remain all day, amuse themselves with their small bows and arrows shooting at birds, collecting and roasting anything edible they may find, and carving bamboo flutes. They build miniature platforms and play at watching the crops, or lash a twigged bamboo to the trunk of a tree pretending to climb a caryota-palm and they often wile away the time by playing on flutes and singing snatches of songs.

The songs are short and artless, a few phrases repeated again and again:

On the hill the long-tailed monkey,
In the valley stalks the tree-bear,
The bear with the tail,
Along the stream-bed runs the monkey,
The monkey without a tail.

Ants and mosquitoes girding their loins,
Stormed the house of the sugar-goddess;
Mutielamma, the village-mother,
Joined in the raid on the sugar-goddess;
Victory won, they returned.

See the stars,
See the sun,
The day is dawning,
The sun is rising,
The bright light comes,
The brilliance comes.

The most important task of children, both boys and girls, is watching the ripening crops. By twos and threes they sit on the field-platforms, high above the waving corn, making as much noise as possible to scare off birds and monkeys; they seem to enjoy this occupation and prove efficient watchers.

There is no institution designed to educate the children in tribal custom or train them in the principles of team work, no age-group system, bachelor's hall or girls' dormitory, no initiation ceremony or communal instruction. Each child picks up all necessary knowledge from the conversation of grown ups, the watching of rites and feasts and occasional spontaneous admonition of parents. Magicians sometimes instruct one of their sons in their art, but even such impartment of knowledge, far from following a systematic course, seems to consist only in occasional explanations, and the prospective *veju* learns more by observation and his own experiences than by actual instruction: "My father didn't teach me anything," said Golla Lachmaya, when I asked him how he became a *veju*, "it was the goddess Mutielamma who told me all I know."[1]

For the Reddi boy childhood merges imperceptibly into adolescence as he follows more and more the occupations of the adult men, but for girls the biological signs of maturity are emphasized by certain ceremonial observations. When she menstruates for the first time a small hut or leaf-shelter, called *samarta gursi* is built for her at some distance from the house and there she must sleep and eat till her period is over. During that time the menstruating girl may leave the village and work in the jungle, but she is not allowed to enter a house. In the Godavari Region she is given part of the family's ordinary food, and no ceremony marks the end of the seclusion. But among the Reddis of the Northern Hills the girl's mother cooks for her just outside the hut, and when the menstrual flow ceases the women pour water over the girl and wash her thoroughly. If the family can afford it she is given a new sari, but otherwise her old one is washed. Bathed and dressed in a clean cloth, the girl stands with her fists clenched and elbows bent, in front of her mother who taking a small chicken and swinging it three times round her daughter's head, cuts its throat saying: "*Kori raja korku.*" My informants asserted that they did not know the exact meaning of these words, but *raja korku* is a phrase that occurs frequently in incantations of hill deities and would seem to be the name of a *konda dēvata*; perhaps the chicken sacrificed is intended for that particular *konda devata*. It is afterwards thrown away into the jungle and is eaten by no one.[2] Finally the girl is brought into the house, where all

1. Cf. pp. 231, 232.

2. The throwing away of the chicken reminds us of a similar act destined to appease evil spirits that cause disease (cf. p. 184) and suggests that the aversion of the potential danger from malignant spirits, to which a girl is particularly exposed during the crisis of puberty, is the motive for this sacrifice. For the sacrificial animals offered to benign deities are invariably eaten.

FIG. 49. A herdsboy with his pan-flute.

FIG. 50. Cooking the wedding-food.

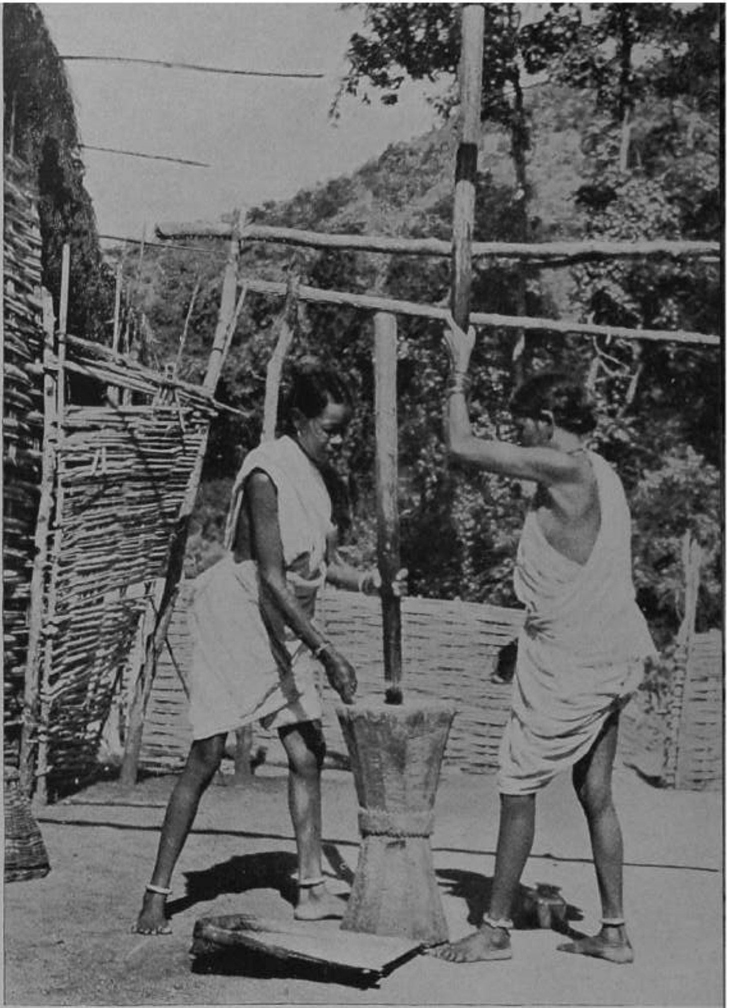


FIG. 51. Pounding millet.

the members of the household partake in a common meal.

In the Godavari villages girls frequently marry before puberty and are living in their husband's house when the first menstruation occurs. Then it is the husband who builds the menstruation hut, and his mother or a close female relative brings the girl her food. After the first, or in some cases the second menstruation the hut is burnt, and from then on she is not banished from the house during her periods.

Yet to the Reddi every menstruating woman is impure and a source of magical infection. She may not take part in any ceremony, may not cook or touch water-pots, may not climb into the attic of her house and must sleep on the veranda. She is allowed to go to the forest for wood and even to weed a field. But she may not sow or reap, nor even sit on a field-platform. Neither may she go fishing. At the end of her period she must bathe and wash before resuming her household duties. While a woman is in her period her husband is also debarred from participating in ceremonies and ritual acts, and he is not allowed to cross the Godavari; he may plough, but not sow.

Excessive and prolonged menstruation is attributed to the machinations of a jealous co-wife or to the venom of an enemy. For certain *veju* among the Reddis of the hills are believed to know a medicine which, if mixed into a woman's food, will cause her to menstruate incessantly. Against such an affliction there is said to be no other remedy than the counter magic of another *veju*.

## *Getting Married*

Marriage is so much the natural state for every adult Reddi that its desirability is never seriously deliberated. The question is not whether to get married but where to find a suitable mate and the money for the wedding expenses. Single men or women are unknown except in the case of serious and lasting illness or mental deficiency. Yaws,[1] unfortunately prevalent among the Reddis, has condemned several men and women to involuntary celibacy, though persons in early stages of the disease are not necessarily debarred from marriage. Impotence, too, disqualifies a man from marriage, and if he is already married will probably cause his wife to desert him. But it seems that Reddis are seldom troubled by this ailment and they know a tuber which, if eaten, is sure to cure natural impotence. Many of my informants told me that they have seen the tuber, but did not know the name. "Why should we know what it is called, we who have never stood in need of it?" The tuber is useless, however if impotence is caused by the 'medicine' of a *veju* which an enemy has mixed with a man's food.

Sexual anomalies, though rare, are also considered an obstacle to matrimony. The only case that came to my notice is that of Kopal

1. Framboesia.

Pandaya (cf. Genealogy I), the brother of Kopal Potaya of Gogulapudi (House 4), who is evidently a hermaphrodite. Ever since he was a small child, his abnormal development has been recognized and from the age of seven or eight he has dressed like a girl and associated with women. He wears a sari and a great number of ornaments, such as nose-ring, ear-studs, several necklaces, blue and yellow glass bangles and large aluminium anklets. His hair is parted in the middle, carefully smoothed with oil, and tied up in a bun at the back. He moves like a woman, squats on the ground in a feminine manner, and speaks in a high and seemingly affected voice. For several years he has been living in Kamaran with his mother's brother, Golla Komaya, who is married, but childless. Though referred to as a man, bearing a male name, and addressed with the male relationship terms, he engages in all womanly occupations, does housework, cooks his own food, carries water on the head and not on the shoulder like other men, helps in cleaning and weeding fields, but never in felling the jungle. He never sows and does not even plant jawari, although women frequently take part in dibbling seed on *podu*-fields. At feasts he dances with the women and does not take an active part in the sacrificial rites; he never acts as a *veju,* and I found no indication that he indulged in homo-sexual practices, though I am not certain of this last point.

Every normal boy or girl then expects to marry. And as young people mature, childhood friendships lead to flirtations and flirtations to courtship, but there are no institutions in the Reddis' social organization designed to draw the young people of opposite sex together. There is no legalized approach of boy and girl as in so many other tribes, no girls' dormitory where the Reddi boy may sing and gossip with the girls of a neighbouring village, no games or alternating songs in which he may test their wit or show off his own, and no work gangs where boys and girls labour side by side. Chance meetings in a jungle clearing, a tryst in the moonlit fields, moments of leisure during visits to an old grandmother, stolen hours in the evening shadows, all are opportunities for would-be lovers. And at feasts and weddings when kinsmen gather girls and boys slip away from the merry crowds to enjoy the delights of love. Although premarital sexual intercourse does not meet with social approval, lovers surprised evoke merriment rather than wrath and even a prolonged love-affair, unless the rules of exogamy are infringed, causes little stir in the community. Marriage soon legalizes the union.

Young people are in an inconspicuous way tenacious and resourceful when they have set their heart on winning a particular girl or man. Love-magic with all its excitement and secrecy is not unknown to the Reddis. There exists, for instance, a leaf whose juice has wonderful power. If a man rubs it ever so lightly on a woman's back or hair she will be filled with desire for him, and as long as she lives, even though she may be married, her thoughts will be only for him. Gurgunta

Gangreddi, the famous *veju* of Pantapalli, is reputed to know of this precious leaf, and Madi Zogreddi, the *kulam pedda,* told me laughingly that Gangreddi had often offered him the magical juice, suggesting that Zogreddi should pick a pretty girl and have a try. The juice is equally powerful if a woman uses it to capture her love; but a woman must be careful, because if she applies it on a man's body it causes his death instead of making him love-sick; she must only sprinkle a little on the man's cloth and then it will have the desired effect. Yet love-magic is not without its dangers, and it carries with it the belief that those who use it are likely to grow poor.

Recent developments in the size of settlements and economic conditions and the Reddis' contact with Hindus have brought about a change in ideas as to the proper avenues to marriage. Where the Reddis live in small groups of houses, loosely scattered over the hills, every young man must know most of his potential brides fairly well. In his own village there may be only two or three girls of the right age and relationship, and the neighbouring settlements are all small and contain only a few eligible girls. These he has met again and again during childhood, when his parents took him to see relatives in other villages, or when the girls accompanied their parents on visits to his own village. In adolescence he has visited alone, staying now with one relative and now with another, going to dance at the annual festivals in the neighbourhood and bringing small presents of new grain to his nearest relations after each harvest. No doubt he could search for a wife outside the small circle of the neighbouring villages, but without friends and connections it is difficult to win a girl in a strange village. There is, moreover, the preference of marrying a girl from his mother's family, perhaps a daughter of his mother's brother, and with these girls he is generally on quite friendly terms. In the small hill-villages consideration of wealth have very little influence on the choice of a mate, for no man possesses much more than his neighbour, bride-prices are nominal or entirely lacking, and the cost of the wedding-feast is very moderate.

Quite different is the situation in the Godavari valley. Here the villages are larger and composed of several exogamous clans, but even here the Reddis tend to take wives from other villages. The easiness of water-traffic, trade and work in the service of merchants have widened the Reddi's social horizon and with it the circle in which he can find his mate. Yet ironically enough, the individual's freedom of choice has proportionately narrowed. For though the scope for selection has increased with the density of population, the actual choice of a mate is gradually passing from the hands of the boy and girl into those of parents and elders. Ideas of bourgeois Hindu respectability, introduced and fostered by the constant contact with merchants, are gaining ascendancy and the Reddis are beginning to feel ashamed of all customs

not in accordance with the new standards. These ideas have even found their way into some hill-villages, though there they are as yet a purely theoretical postulate. The official attitude in these large river-villages is that marriages should be arranged by the parents, and that there is consequently no need for the young people to get to know each other beforehand. Opportunities for courtship are restricted. Indeed, the idea of courtship as a publicly recognized alley to marriage is treated with a certain amount of scorn. Here most of my informants asserted that there is no premarital sexual intercourse; but if we judge from the number of love-affairs that become known it seems that what they denied was the social approval of sex-relations between the unmarried rather than their occurrence.

How then does the more sophisticated Reddi consider a marriage should be arranged? And to what extent is his view translated into practice?

When a boy reaches the age of eighteen or twenty and is able to do the full work of a man, be it on the fields or in the employ of timber-merchants, his parents or guardians are expected to look out for a suitable bride. Several considerations guide them in their search. First of all the rules of clan-exogamy must be observed. We shall see in the next chapter that Reddi society is organized in exogamous, patrilineal clans, and that some of these clans, believed to stand in brother relationship, are welded into larger exogamous groups. Thus all agnate blood-relations and in addition large number of other girls of related clans are excluded from the circle of potential mates. Special consideration, on the other hand, is given to the daughters of the kinsmen of the boy's mother. If any of her brothers has a daughter of suitable age, she is considered the most desirable bride, but hardly less preferable is the daughter of a paternal aunt. Marriages with cross-cousins have in the Reddis' eye several advantages: the characters of both bride and bridegroom are well known, they form a new link between the two allied families, the negotiations with the girl's parents, who are close blood relations, are easy, and last but not least the question of the bride-price is less likely to stand in the way of an agreement. These advantages are, however, not confined to the marriage of cross-cousins. Once marriage-relations have been established between two families further alliances are expected to follow, and the family that has first given a daughter in marriage has even a certain right to receive a girl of the next generation in return.

The negotiations for a girl's hand may be conducted by the boy's parents or by a paternal uncle accompanied by some close relatives. If the families concerned are related by marriage or on terms of intimate friendship, an informal agreement may already have been reached before the girl's parents are ceremonially approached, but in any case

a single visit is considered sufficient and a decision is generally given at once. Among the Reddis there seems to be little ceremonial attached to these negotiations. The party arrive at the girl's house and after greeting the inmates and having their feet washed they sit down. Over a pipe of tobacco, but with little preliminary talk they state their business in plain words. There are no allegorical dialogues and acceptance or refusal of the proposals are in equally unequivocal terms. As a rule the bridegroom's party presents the girl's parents with some beads, turmeric and *bottu* powder,[1] but these are only tokens of friendship and are by no means regarded as a payment or as an obligatory gift. Quite apart from purely personal reasons, the distance of a prospective son-in-law's village is considered sufficient ground for hesitation on the side of the girl's parents, who do not like their daughters to live far away. The brideprice must also be agreed upon, but it seems that on this point the negotiations seldom founder. Sometimes the intermediaries suggest that the marriage should take place without delay, but this is only possible if the money or provisions for the marriage-feast have already been collected; more often the fixing of the date for the wedding is postponed to a later date and as much as one year may elapse between these negotiations and the wedding. In some cases the match-makers are expected by the girl's parents, and then they are entertained with food and drink; but if they arrive unannounced they are offered whatever there may be in the house. Compared to the elaborate ceremonial connected with marriage-negotiations in many other tribes, the procedure followed by the Reddis is extremely informal. Moreover we shall see presently that even this formality is often dispensed with and the bride secured by more abrupt and straightforward methods.

According to the conventional view neither the boy nor the girl voice their opinion in the choice of their mate, and where girls are married before puberty, a custom which, amongst the Reddis of the Godavari valley, is becoming increasingly popular, the matches are arranged by the parents alone, and the boy, once he has decided to marry an immature girl, takes little interest in the selection of his child-bride. If both partners are adult, however, their elders will consult them before coming to a decision. "If we tried to choose a girl for a boy, whom he does not like," explained one of my friends, "he would say at once: 'I don't want her, but if you think her so nice, why don't you marry her yourself?' and a girl will cry if her parents try to give her to a boy who does not please her, so her father always asks her before he gives an answer." Sometimes a boy himself asks his parents to negotiate for a girl who has caught his imagination, and unless grave objections stand in the way of such a marriage, they will seldom oppose his choice.

1. Cf. p. 181.

Thus, even in this most formal and respectable manner of match-making the young people have a fair chance of asserting their personal wishes, and it is only the practice of child-marriage, that deprives the girl, at least temporarily, of all influence over her own destiny.

Once a girl's parents have promised her to a particular man, it is a point of honour that they should not marry her to anybody else, but their promise does not constitute an engagement with legal consequences. If the girl subsequently elopes with another man, or the parents break their promise, no damages or compensation can be claimed. No gifts have passed between the families, no expenses have been incurred and the bethrothal gives to neither side any right that could be enforced by tribal law.

Yet even where relationship favours a claim to a girl's hand, things do not always run so smoothy. Kalagula Kanaya, a man of Borredigudem, sought for his father's younger brother's son the daughter of Vala Sitaya, a resident of Katkur. The girl's mother was the daughter of Kanaya's father, but though the proposed husband was thus one generation older than the girl, he was of suitable age, and since Vala Sitaya himself had married a girl of Kalagulu Kanaya's family, it was considered just that he should give his daughter to a man of the same family. Unfortunately, however, Vala Sitaya had already promised her to the son of Vinel Bhimreddi of Koinda. But Kalagulu Kanaya would accept no refusal and went to Katkur accompanied by five other men from Borredigudem to press his claim. Both parties agreed to discuss the matter before a council of elders, and the two caste headmen (*kulam pedda*), Madi Zogreddi of Katkur and Karkal Bhimaya from the opposite side of the Godavari[1] were asked to attend. At first all agreed that Kalagulu Kanaya's claim was legitimate, and the girl's father said he would willingly have given his daughter to Kanaya's kinsman had the Kalagulu people asked for her before he had promised her to another man. Now, he argued, it was too late to break off the engagement and under no circumstances could he go back on his word. His case was apparently strengthened by the fact that the girl herself preferred the man to whom she was promised. However, Kalagulu Kanaya and his partisans would not yield; the discussion became more and more heated, until at last, despite the presence of the two caste-headmen, it ended in a free fight. Madi Zogreddi took the side of his fellow-villagers, and Karkal Bhimreddi washed his hands of the case, regretting only that no feast for the elders had crowned an amicable settlement. Eventually the uncompromising Kalagulu Kanaya and his friends were outnumbered and badly beaten by the villagers of Katkur.

As far as the boy and girl are concerned, betrothal alters little in their relationship towards each other. If they are cross-cousins or otherwise related, or if they live in the same or in neighbouring villages

1. The position of the *kulam pedda* will be discussed in the next chapter (pp. 156-160).

they will continue to meet occasionally, but their attitude towards each other will not undergo any appreciable change; the boy is not required to pay formal visits to his prospective parents-in-law. Intimacy between a formally betrothed couple is strongly deprecated, and is indeed probably rarer than between other boys and girls, because any contact between those engaged is likely to evoke comment.

We have mentioned already that the Reddis in the Godavari valley have begun to practise child-marriage and that there the age of the bride is not a factor which weighs heavily with either party in the discussion of the date for the wedding. All depends on the capacity of the bridegroom's family to provide the money and foodstuffs necessary for the celebration of the wedding feast.

As soon as the bridegroom or his people have made all preparations they send messengers to the bride's village to announce the day on which they will come and fetch the bride, and to invite the bride's relations to attend the marriage-feast. The girl's parents do not always agree to the proposed date; for instance, if they are still too busy on their fields they may suggest a postponement of the ceremony.

The usual trend of these final negotiations is reflected in an antiphonal women's dance song; from this it seems that the gifts to bride and bridegroom and the food served at the wedding are the central interest;

Bride's party : The girl in the house, the brilliant bodice
The girl in the house, the hibiscus flower.
Groom's party : The small one in the brilliant bodice,
The yellow flower has gone.[1]
Bride's party : We will give the brilliant bodice,
We will give the yellow flower.
Oh, the feast of Sankranti,
Oh, the feast of Shiva's night.[2]
Groom's party : The brilliant bodice is bringing wood.
The brilliant bodice is bringing wood.
Bride's party : We'll bring the brilliant bodice,
We'll bring the brilliant bodice.
Groom's party : What ornaments will you give your girl?
What jewels will you give the small girl?
Bride's party : Anklets we'll give her for her legs.
Groom's party : What ornaments will you give your girl?
What ornaments will you give the small girl?

1. The 'brilliant bodice' and 'yellow flower' stand in this song alternatively for the bride and for the wedding-feast; bodices of bright colours are in the Godavari villages worn on festive occasions, yellow is the colour of turmeric used profusely at all weddings.

2. The wedding is here likened to the Telugu feasts Sankranti and Shivratri.

| | |
|---|---|
| Bride's party : | Toe-rings we will give our girl,<br>Betel-leaves to the diamond girl. |
| Groom's party : | What ornaments will you give your girl?<br>What ornaments will you give the small girl? |
| Bride's party : | A flower for the ear we'll give our girl.<br>What jewels then will you give our girl? |
| Groom's party : | A silver-belt we will give your girl. |
| Bride's party : | What sari will you give our girl? |
| Groom's party : | A precious sari we will give your girl. |
| Bride's party : | What bodice will you give our girl? |
| Groom's party : | A precious bodice we will give your girl. |
| Bride's party : | What jewels will you give our girl? |
| Groom's party : | Rings for the ears we will give your girl. |
| Bride's party : | What jewels will you give to your bridegroom? |
| Groom's party : | Studs for the ears we will give our boy. |
| Bride's party : | What jewels will you give your bridegroom? |
| Groom's party : | A belt of silver-links we'll give him,<br>A belt we will give to the diamond boy. |
| Both parties : | On what day the brilliant bodice,<br>On what day the yellow flower? |
| Groom's party : | On Monday the brilliant bodice,<br>On Monday the yellow flower.<br>On Monday the feast of Sankranti,<br>On Monday the feast of Shivratri. |
| Bride's party : | We don't want the brilliant bodice,<br>We don't want the yellow flower,<br>We don't want the feast of Sankranti,<br>We don't want the feast of Shivratri. |

The bridegroom's party proposes in identical terms Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for the wedding, but the bride's party refuses all these days. At last Friday is suggested and the bride's party answers:

| | |
|---|---|
| Bride's party : | Then we will have the brilliant bodice,<br>Then we will have the yellow flower. |
| Groom's party : | Tamarind curry for the brilliant bodice. |
| Bride's party : | Right! That will do for the brilliant bodice.<br>For the brilliant bodice what food shall there be? |
| Bride's party : | No, that won't do for the brilliant bodice. |
| Groom's party : | Curry of leaves for the brilliant bodice. |

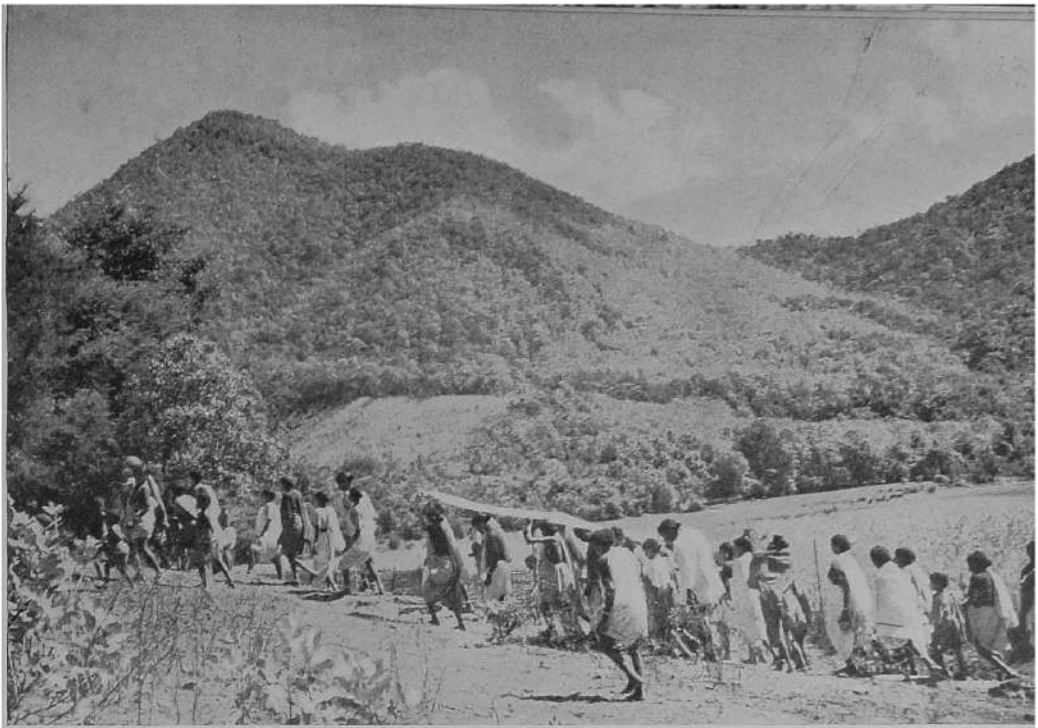


FIG. 52. Wedding-procession at Kakishnur.

FIG. 53. Wedding-guests embark on dug-outs lashed together.

FIG. 54. The bridal couple is anointed with oil.

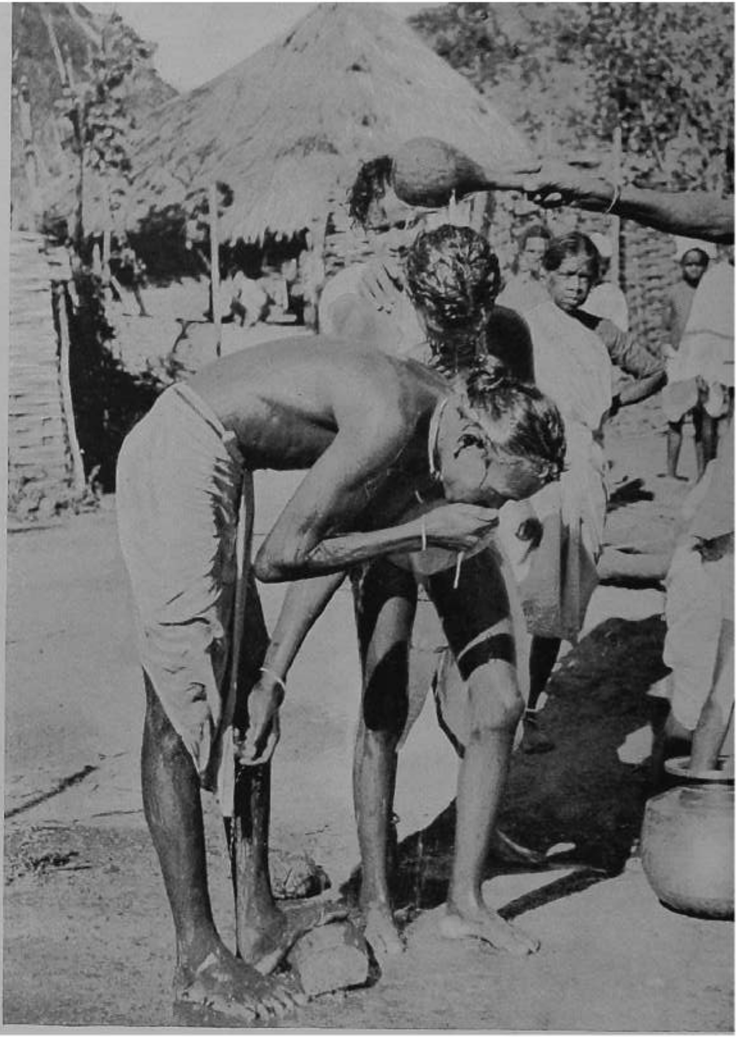


FIG. 55. After the wedding the bridal couple is bathed: the water flows from the bride onto the groom.

see p. 26

Groom's party : Of millet a meal for the brilliant bodice.
Bride's party : No, that won't do for the brilliant bodice.
Groom's party : Of rice a meal for the brilliant bodice.
Bride's party : Right! That will do for the brilliant bodice.
For the brilliant bodice what food will there be?
Groom's party : Of green lentils a dish for the brilliant bodice,
Of green lentils a dish for the yellow flower.
Bride's party : No, that won't do for the brilliant bodice.
Groom's party : A dish of red beans for the brilliant bodice.
Bride's party : Right! That will do for the brilliant bodice.

On the day appointed for the wedding a few men and women of the bridegroom's village repair to the bride's house where they are entertained with food and drink. This party must not include the bridegroom, and generally not his parents. Towards evening they return, bringing the bride and a party of her relatives and co-villagers. The wedding takes place either on that night or the next, and the ceremonies often last till the following afternoon, when the wedding guests, including the bride's relatives and friends, return home.

A detailed account of a Reddi wedding, which I attended in Kakishnur, is contained in Chapter XII and here it will suffice to enumerate shortly the paraphernalia which the more sophisticated Reddis of the Godavari valley are beginning to consider essential for the conclusion of a marriage with full rites.

The night before the wedding the bridegroom must give a feast to the people of his own village; rice and vegetable-curry are served in the open and before the meal a small quantity of the food is offered to the Departed in the bridegroom's house. The women mark their foreheads with *bottu* and in token of friendship smear each other as well as the men with turmeric. The next day the bridegroom's messengers fetch the bride from her home village and are entertained by the bride's parents. Relatives and friends invite the bride to their houses, where she is given a ceremonial bath of oil and water. The messengers should if possible be accompanied by a Tsakal (washerman) and by Madiga musicians, and at the wedding ceremony itself the presence of these men as well as that of a Mangal (barber) is becoming increasingly popular. Thus the co-operation of men of three other castes is required for a Reddi wedding of this type.

On arrival the bridal party halts outside the bridegroom's village; there they are given a little food, generally millet and dal because it is assumed that they are hungry after their journey. Then a procession is formed; the bride, under a sari-canopy, closely surrounded by her relations, and preceded by the Tsakal and some Madiga drummers, moves towards the village. At the same time another procession, the

womenfolk of the bridegroom's family, leaves the village and when the two processions meet, they halt and the women sing a marriage hymn.

The bride is then taken to a house, described for the occasion as a "rest-house," and the men of the two villages perform a solemn fraternization ceremony, and this is followed by the public counting of the bride-price, rupees being represented by circular millet cakes. This publicity is intended to avoid any future dispute about the sum due to the bride's parents.

The bride-price has in these villages, become an essential feature of every marriage celebrated in the "proper" way. The amount varies between Rs. 5 and Rs. 15 and is paid either in full or in part on the day after the marriage ceremony; payment may, however, be postponed to a later date, and then another wedding is the customary occasion for the paying of an outstanding bride-price.

After the ceremony of the counting of the cakes both guests and hosts settle down to a meal, prepared by the bridegroom's family, which, if the weather permits, is eaten in the open. Then follows the formal exchange of the bride's clan name for that of her husband, and after she has put on a new sari provided by the bridegroom, the bride and the bridegroom's party come from their different houses in two separate processions to the *piazza*, where they stand opposite each other while the young men dance the marriage-dance (Figs. 56, 57).

After several minor ceremonies the bridal couple is led to a marriage booth, where they sit side by side and the barber performs the final rite. He first cleans their finger and toe nails and anoints their hair with oil, and after cold water has been poured over the couple, he fills their hands with grain, which they throw at each other. He then takes the *pustie*, a small gold or silver locket, strung on a saffron coloured thread, and after showing it to the assembled guests gives it to the bridegroom, who ties it round the neck of the bride; this act constitutes the solemn conclusion of the marriage. After the tying of the *pustie* the couple are considered husband and wife.

Early next morning the bridegroom and bride are given a ceremonial bath, this time together (Figs. 54, 55), and later in the day the bride-price, or at least a small part of it, is publicly paid to the bride's relatives (Fig. 59). Usually one of her paternal uncles receives the money, for the bride's father is not supposed to attend the wedding. Ultimately the bride is formally handed over to the bridegroom and his family, and the spokesman of the bridal party, generally her paternal uncle, asks them to treat the girl with consideration. This completes the wedding ceremonies, the guests return to their own villages, while the bride remains in her husband's house. Next day she cleans the floor of her husband's house with cow-dung and, if she is already mature, she will begin to cook; an immature bride will only help her mother- or

FIG. 56. Wedding dance.

FIG. 57. Wedding dance.

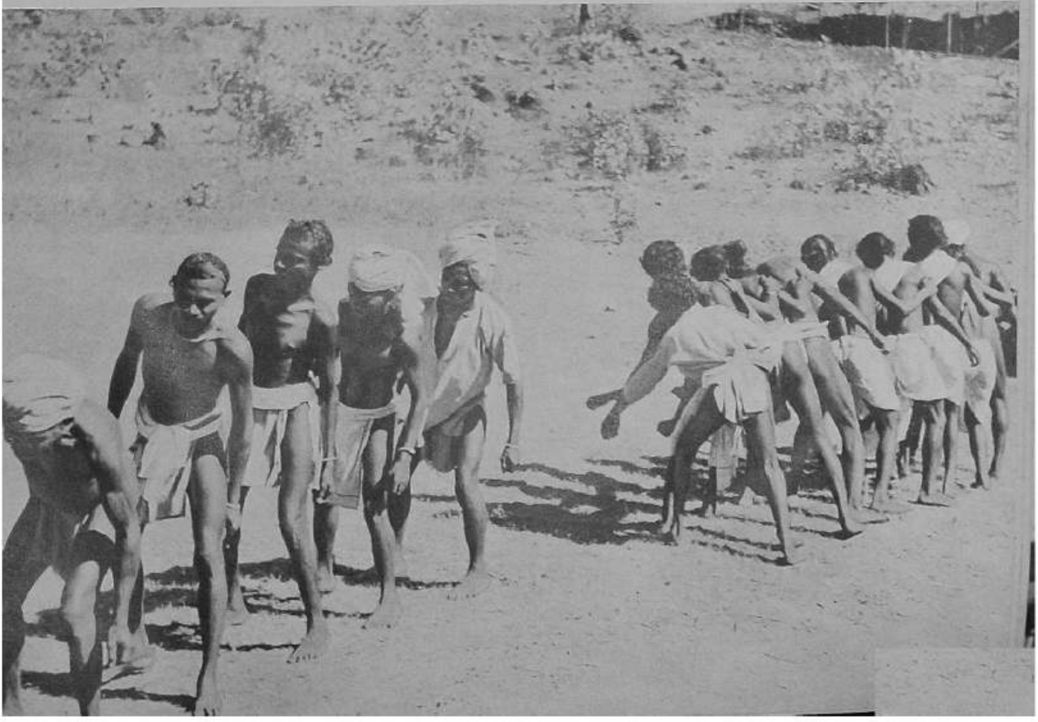


FIG. 58. Before the wedding the *veju* of Kakishnur propitiates the gods.

FIG. 59. The ceremonial paying of the bride-price at a wedding at Kakishnur.

sisters-in-law with the cooking until after her first menstruation.

From this short summary it is clear that a proper wedding (*penli*), as understood by the Reddis of the Godavari villages, is an elaborate and expensive affair. It is only their association with the timber merchants that enables them to procure the cash necessary to pay for the assistance of men of other castes, to give substantial bride-prices and to entertain a hundred or more guests at their weddings with food vastly superior in quality to their everyday fare. All this is far beyond the means of those Reddis who live in the hills and subsist on shifting cultivation, food-gathering and occasional barter; their weddings are infinitely simpler. But even in the Godavari valley there are many men who do not enjoy the favour of the timber merchants and cannot therefore obtain sufficient credit for a costly marriage; and there are some who do not want to pledge the labour of untold years for the prestige of a grand wedding. Indeed, custom provides several other ways of getting married, and once a couple is settled as man and wife, their social status is in no way dependent on the circumstances in which the union was brought about.

If a young man's parents lack the means to pay a bride-price and to give a great wedding-feast, they are in no position to impose their wishes in the choice of a daughter-in-law. Unless they can arrange a marriage with the daughter of a maternal uncle or of similar close relatives, the initiative in finding a bride does not rest with them but with the young man himself, who may bring home a bride in a variety of ways, all of which may be described as 'marriage by capture.'

A young man who has seen a girl whom he wants to marry, spies out the land and makes himself familiar with her daily routine. Then one evening he and several of his friends will go to her village, either on foot or by boat, and, arriving after dark, hide in the jungle. At dawn they lie in wait close to the place where the girl is accustomed to fetch water or to relieve herself and as she approaches, they pounce on her and carry her off before anybody can come to her rescue. Sometimes a girl screams and struggles, but generally her resistance is easily overcome and the men of the girl's village seldom intercept the raiders, nor is it customary to organise a serious pursuit party. Once back in his own village, the abductor tries to persuade the girl to go through the marriage-rites immediately and he has generally held in readiness a sari for the bride and some provisions so that the marriage can be concluded without delay. Such a ceremony is very different from the rites at a 'proper' wedding; the groom feasts the villagers, the bride is dressed in a new sari, and a *pustie* is tied round her neck. Sometimes, however, it is not convenient to celebrate the wedding at once, and then the parents of the girl have a chance of interfering. This happened to Kopal Ramaya of Kakishnur (House 9), who had captured a girl of Kondepudi when she was fetching water from the Godavari. Although

there had been no secret understanding beforehand, she had gone willingly with him and his friends, leaving her pots on the river bank, but Ramaya delayed the wedding and just when the preparations were completed, the girl's parents appeared in Kakishnur and took their daughter home. Four or five days later, she was captured by a man from Tumileru, who took no chances and married her at once; this time her parents raised no objections. It was said that they preferred having their daughter living in Tumileru, for this village lies on the same side of the river as Kondepudi, while Kakishnur on the opposite bank cannot be reached when the Godavari is in flood.

Occasionally the men who come to carry off a girl present themselves at her parents' house and announce their intention. Thus Kopal Tamaya of Parantapalli (House 3) told me that one day, without any previous arrangement, Valla Viraya of Kotturgummi appeared in Parantapalli with a band of young men, and said that he wanted to marry Tamaya's daughter, Yenkamma. He paid a bride-price of Rs. 8 on the spot and took the girl with him to Kottargummi, where the wedding was performed without the presence of any of the bride's relations.

The carrying off of the bride is a favourite practice in the remarriage of widows, and the consequent ceremony is sometimes described as '*sire raike*' (i.e., sari and bodice marriage) since it consists only of the handing over of a sari and sometimes a bodice to the bride and the sprinkling of the couple with saffron water. A young widow, whose marriage has never been consummated, may, however, marry a second time with full rites and in this event she wears the *pustie* of both marriages.

Sometimes a marriage by capture fails owing to the girl's resistance. Vinel Kanaya, a widower of Kakishnur, decided to marry again and sent his friends to Parantapalli to capture Kopal Tamaya's elder daughter, Lachamma, who was widowed and lived under her father's roof. It was still dawn when suddenly ten men entered Tamaya's house and told him that they had come to fetch his daughter. When he asked for whom they wanted her, and heard that Vinel Kanaya was the proposed husband, both he and his wife protested: "Oh, this is an old man, our daughter won't marry him." But the Kakishnur men paid no heed to his remonstrations and though the girl screamed, shouted and struggled, they dragged her out of the house and took her forcibly to Kakishnur. On the way, they tried to reassure her, telling her how well she would be cared for by Vinel Kanaya. In Kakishnur everything had been prepared for the wedding and Lachamma was shown the sari and bodice, which Vinel Kanaya had bought for her; but before the ceremonies could begin she ran back to Parantapalli. Some months later, Vinel Mangaya, a young man of Koinda came with thirty men to Parantapalli and asked Tamaya for Lachamma's hand.

He offered no bride-price, but Lachamma liked the idea of marrying Mangaya, although, it was said, she had never seen him before. The men took Lachamma at once to Koinda, but neither her parents nor any other relations attended the wedding, which was a simple ceremony since the bride had been previously married.

In all these marriages mutual affection was not an important factor. But though love matches may be rather the exception than the rule, even in the Godavari villages many a boy and a girl growing attached to each other decide to get married with or without the parents' consent. If they expect opposition they may elope to another village where friends or relations are likely to give them temporary shelter; there they will stay until their parents have resigned themselves to the match. On their return to the village a simple wedding-ceremony may be performed, but even without this their union is henceforth considered perfectly legal and valid. Should the boy live in another village and his parents not dislike his choice, he will capture the girl in the usual way and bring her to his parent's house, where the wedding will be performed without delay.

Even in negotiated marriages a capture is sometimes staged. A recent instance may help to illustrate this. One morning when Pogal Ramaya of Kutturvada had gone to take the wine from his caryota-palm, Valla Chinnaya of Shiravaka and a band of men seized and carried off his sister Yenkamma who had lived in Ramaya's house since their father's death. When Ramaya came home, his wife told him what had happened; but he was in no way alarmed, for Valla Chinnaya had previously spoken to him of his intention to marry Yenkamma. The next day Ramaya went to Shiravaka, and there he found his sister staying in the house of some of Chinnaya's relations. Since Chinnaya was not prepared to celebrate the wedding at once, Ramaya took her home. Two years later Yenkamma reached maturity and the following autumn Chinnaya sent two of his fellow villagers to Parantapalli to say, that he would arrange the marriage after harvest. Here the capturing of the girl was evidently only a formality, designed perhaps to strengthen the man's claim on the girl.

So we see that even among the Reddis of the Godavari valley the elaborate and costly procedure of 'proper' weddings is not universal. Among those of the hills both south and north of the river, except in some *muttadar* villages, the marriage ceremonies are much more simple.

The men of Gogulapudi, for instance, laughed at the idea of paying money for the bride or hiring the services of Madiga and Mala musicians. "Where shall we get the money for such things?" said Lachmaya, "we are glad if we can buy a sari for the bride and, may be, another for her mother." In these villages they usually marry after the harvest, for then they have grain with which to feed the wedding guests.

If the bridegroom's relations formally fetch the bride her parents may entertain them with food and drink while on the wedding evening the bridegroom provides a feast for the people of both parties in his village. Some Reddis call a barber to minister at the rite of tying the *pustie*, but most weddings are performed without the help of any outsider. Here even the more formal weddings are very cheap. Patla Gangaya of Gogulapudi, spent at his wedding Re. 1 on a Mangal, As. 8 on Madiga drummers, Re. 1 on a *pustie*, and Rs. 1-8 on a sari, which as he said himself "was not very good," and fed the guests with one bag of millet raised on his own field. The ceremonies included the bathing of the bride and groom, the changing of the clan name and the tying of the *pustie*.

Sometimes marriage is preceded by the residence of the prospective husband in the house of the girl's parents. A man with a growing daughter invites a young boy, to come and live in his house and help in the cultivation of his field, promising to give him the girl in marriage as soon as she grows up. Often the boy will be an orphan, but sometimes even young men whose parents are alive accept such an offer; and this happened indeed with Gurgunta Viraya, whose experiences we will discuss in the next chapter (p. 159). More typical is perhaps the case of Mander Komaya of Kunkulgayapaka (Cf. Genealogy II), who had four daughters but no sons. While the girls were quite young he took the three orphaned sons of his wife's brother, a Gurgunta man of Dornalpushe, into his house and as the three elder girls matured, he gave them one after the other to the three boys without holding any wedding ceremony; even after Komaya's death his daughters and sons-in-law continued to live together with the girls' mother and younger sister in the two-house settlement of Kunkulgayapaka.

Though differing in certain details, the same principles underlie the customs observed by the majority of Reddis in the Northern Hills. Here the girls are never married before puberty, and simplicity and informality are the key-note in the conclusion of marriages. The paying of a bride-price is not essential, but those men who can afford it give their parents-in-law between Rs. 2 and Rs. 4 as well as a sari and feast the villagers and those of the bride's relatives who attend the wedding; the total cost of the proceedings is however rarely as much as Rs. 6, and some people do not spend any cash on the wedding but wait till after a good harvest, when they can feed the guests with their own grain. Seldom are members of other castes called to attend, and instead of a silver *pustie*, a piece of saffron is tied round the bride's neck. There too some men marry without giving a wedding feast or paying a bride-price, just by taking the girl to their house. "If we have money," I was told, "we will prepare food and give the parents-in-law a *sari* and some rupees; but if we have not got anything, what shall we do?" Coercion on the part of the parents seems rare, and child-marriage is

unknown. If a boy and a girl fall in love they may go to the jungle and stay there for two or three days; when they return to the village they are considered husband and wife without any ceremony being performed, or they may go to another village and stay with relatives. The capturing of girls as practised in the Godavari Region is not customary in this area.

When we describe the system of feudal chiefs or *muttadar*, we shall see that where their influence prevails marriage ceremonies become more elaborate, expenses soar and the assistance of men of other castes is regarded as indispensable; or, in other words, wedding feasts become matters of prestige.

Before concluding this discussion of the approaches to marriage, let us note the Reddis' reaction to certain types of behaviour that do not conform to any recognized custom.

Though a couple eloping in order to escape parental opposition incurs no lasting malice, not all lovers avail themselves of this simplest way of overcoming their difficulties, and many young people enjoy secret intrigues with the result that sometimes an unmarried girl finds herself with child. Then the old men of both communities concerned call the man responsible and insist on his marrying the girl. Even if the parents of either side view the match with disfavour they will often be persuaded to give their consent. My informants thought that if the girl had a reputation for promiscuity she might be driven out of the village and her child given the clan-name of any of the potential fathers. They admitted, however, that they had never heard of a concrete instance and suggested that a girl's parents would never allow matters to come to such a pass, but would marry her off to anybody willing to take her into his house.

The only real and unsurmountable obstacle that stands in the way of the union of two people bent on marriage is the rule of clan-exogamy. Members of the same clan are not allowed to marry and a couple living together in defiance of this taboo, must face public condemnation and possibly excommunication (cf. pp. 154, 155). My friends of Gogulapudi considered such an event most disgraceful and assured me that the guilty lovers would not dare to show their faces in their own villages. Less serious is a union between a man and a woman who do not belong to the same clan but to brother clans, and though in this case no wedding ceremony can be performed, the couple suffers from little social disability.

We have seen that there are many alleys by which a Reddi may approach his bride. But whichever circumstances and inclination induce him to take, they all lead to the same goal, and once married, the couple's social position is in no way dependent on the method by which their union was achieved, provided it conforms with the laws of exogamy. This is still true even in those villages of the Godavari valley

where growing importance is attached to the celebration of full wedding-rites. For though a sumptuous marriage-feast does lend temporary prestige to the donors, it does not raise the status of the union itself.

Hand in hand with the elaboration of wedding-ceremonies and increased expenditure goes a strengthening of the parental influence in the choice of mates, and this development has reached its climax with the adoption of child-marriage. Although there are still many ways in which a youth may win the girl of his own choice, numerous young men do leave the selection of a bride entirely in the hands of parents or elders. It is not that their families exert undue pressure on young people and persuade them into a particular marriage, nor can it be said that in marrying an immature and often unknown girl the Reddi youth is following blindly a dictate of tradition. But to marry an immature girl has, in the eyes of those in contact with Hindu populations, the stimulus of respectability. Both boys and girls know, moreover, that marriages do not necessarily last a lifetime, and in choosing a second partner men as well as women are free to follow their own hearts.

### *Married Life*

When on the morning after her wedding, a young wife replasters the floor of her husband's house, which in most cases is still that of her parents-in-law, and then proceeds to the water to wash the clothes, not only of her husband, but also those of his family, she signifies her allegiance to a new economic unit. Few Reddi girls begin married life in a house of their own, unless they marry a widower or a young man who has recently lost his parents and taken over their house. But such a situation is exceptional and usually the young wife spends the first months, and sometimes years, under the roof of her parents-in-law or of other near relatives of her husband. If we consider the small size of the average Reddi house, the implications of such an arrangement are fairly evident. It means that she lives throughout the day in the most intimate contact with female members of her husband's family and stands to a large extent under the authority of her mother-in-law. At home she is hardly ever alone with her husband, and since the times when man and wife work together in field or forest are comparatively few, she sees much less of him than of her 'in-laws.'

The strained relations between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are proverbial among Reddis, and have given rise to many an allegory. One popular saying compares the moon to a young wife: when the moon is full and radiant with joy, she journeys proudly through the sky on the way to her mother's house, but when the moon wanes, becoming shrivelled and evidently sad, she is returning to the house of her mother-in-law. Similarly when talking of palm-wine the Reddis say that you should not mix the wine of the palmyra and caryota, "for, like mother and daughter-in-law, these two wines fight in the stomach."

As a rule the period which a young wife spends in the house of her parents-in-law does not last very long, for most husbands soon build a house of their own. Sometimes the position is reversed and the young couple go to stay with the wife's family; this arrangement seems in some respects more satisfactory, for a girl's father seems less likely to quarrel with his daughter's husband, and brothers-in-law are frequently particularly attached to each other. If both husband and wife belong to the same village, the problem of residence immediately after marriage is of little consequence, and in the large villages such marriages are now fairly frequent.

FIG. K. Woman's broom.

Apart from those instances when a married son or daughter lives under the parental roof, Reddi households are often composed of more members than just husband and wife and their children. A glance at the house-lists in Appendix III shows us that only three of the ten houses of Parantapalli are occupied by a single married couple and their unmarried children. The others contain, in addition to the householder and his wife, married or widowed children and their offspring, married brothers, widowed parents and other close relatives. Of the 32 houses of Kakishnur 18 are inhabited by husband, wife and unmarried children, while in 3 houses live in addition married sons or daughters, in 4 houses the householders' brothers or sisters, and in 7 houses other relations including widowed parents.

Where several couples live under one roof, the women usually cook on separate hearths, and though the men may combine in the cultivation of one large field, they will share out the grain after harvest. Thus each family does its own house-keeping and there is neither a common store not a common purse; all earnings are disposed of individually. There is, of course, a good deal of interchange of food-stuffs and sharing

or borrowing in times of need.

Polygamous households are rare. Theoretically a man may marry as many wives as he chooses but most Reddis seem content with one wife at a time. Of 86 marriages recorded in the Godavari Region 5 were polygamous, and only one man had more than two wives. In one instance the first wife was barren, and in another the wives were sisters. The sterility of the first wife is, however, no cogent ground either for divorce or polygamy. In Parantapalli and Kakishnur alone there are four women who, although married for a considerable time, have no children; yet none of the husbands has taken a second wife.

Golla Lachmaya of Gogulapudi (Fig. 6), one of the very few Reddis with three wives, says he married a third wife, because he had lost both the children by his first wife, and his second wife had only given him one daughter. The third wife, Bulamma did bear him a son, but I doubt whether it was the desire for male off-spring that led him to his third marriage, for when he took Bulamma into his house she was herself on the point of separating from her first husband owing to the sterility of the union. Bulamma had first been married to Kechel Gangaya of Mautagudem, but since they had no children they always quarrelled; Gangaya had threatened to take a second wife and Bulamma vowed she would run away rather than stay with a junior wife. But once when Lachmaya attended the Mango-Feast at Mautagudem, he heard of this quarrel and asked Bulamma to come and live with him in Gogulapudi. Curiously enough Bulamma, who had objected to sharing her home with one other wife, went readily with Lachmaya who had already two wives. Young and pretty, she succeeded in monopolizing her elderly husband's attention, and other villagers told me sarcastically that Lachmaya dared not go near his other wives, fearing the violent temper of Bulamma, who threatened to beat him if he slept with any but her. Within two years Bulamma had so established herself that she was able to prevent Lachmaya from providing properly for his other wives. So they had to maintain themselves; the second wife, with the help of her unmarried brother, cultivated a field of her own and the first wife supported herself by basket-making, generally a male occupation, and bartered her wares in the plains.

While Lachmaya's first and second marriages had been celebrated with the rites and simple festivities usual in hill-villages, no ceremonies marked Bulamma's entry into his house; nevertheless she enjoys more than equality with the two senior wives.

The relationship of husband and wife does not fully crystalize until they have set up their own household. As long as they are members of either parent's household they must adapt themselves to the general routine and have little influence on the management of affairs. But once a man has built his own house, and is no longer subject to parental wishes, and a wife orders her own household, they can develop

their relationship beyond sexual attraction to the firm and loyal co-operation which must cement any family so dependent on its own resources as that of hill-men living, often in one-house settlements, in the heart of the forest.

In theory the husband is the master of the house and owner of all possessions except those personal belongings which the wife may have been given by her parents. He decides on the fields to be cultivated and can dispose of any crop or domestic animal raised by their common effort. If he chooses to move to another village his wife is expected to follow him unquestioningly, and in the arrangement of the children's marriages it is he who is supposed to have the final word. But this fiction is not always upheld and I know of more than one husband who has been persuaded by his wife to leave his home-village and settle among her relations. The husband is, however, the legal representative of the family, for, having no property of her own, the wife cannot be fined or held responsible for actions committed with or without his knowledge. Responsibility falls always on the man; on the husband while she lives under his roof; on her father if she returns to her parents' house; and on her lover if she is caught in adultery. A woman is hardly ever punished by tribal justice.

We would err, however, if we deduced from this legal and theoretical position that Reddi women are meek, docile or dependent. They are generally quite able to hold their own; they assert themselves in all matters of household and family life, and nothing in their attitude suggests that they owe their husband deference or obedience. When in the house, at work or at leisure, at meal times, at public functions and dances, men and women behave as if both had exactly the same social status and neither excelled in importance or demanded a greater measure of respect and consideration. The western principle of "ladies first" has as little place in Reddi domestic life as the attitude of the Brahmin who enjoys a hearty meal, while his wife waits on him. Hindu ideology has modified much in Reddi culture, but the essential equality of the sexes is today as strong as it has always been, and though the new custom of marrying girls long before maturity perhaps exposes the child-bride to a good deal of bullying from her mother-in-law, it does not alter her ultimate position, and she does not relinquish one iota of her traditional rights; the greater the marriage-expenses, the more effective is the threat of running away, for, as we shall see presently, the husband has a poor chance of recovering more than a fraction of what he has spent on the wedding.

The Reddi woman's position as an equal partner and companion of her husband, is largely due to the importance of her contribution to the maintenance of the common household. The co-operation of husband and wife in the economic field consists not so much in work in unison, but in interlinking activities. Though division of labour between

the sexes is more developed than in societies of food-gatherers, few economic tasks are accomplished by either sex alone. In agriculture it is the man who fells and burns the jungle, but the woman helps in preparing the ground; both husband and wife sow, but the tedious work of weeding falls mainly to women, while in guarding the ripening crops it is only by alternating watches that a couple can effectively safeguard its grain. Similarly the men fell caryota-palms and bring home the pith, but woman's labour in drying and pounding converts it into foodstuff. The most valuable of the wife's contributions to the family's food supply, however, are the many edible roots, leaves and fruits, which she collects throughout the year. Even in trade and barter women take their place, and the baskets and winnowing fans produced by men are often peddled by women, who do not hesitate to undertake excursions to other villages in search of customers for their wares.

It is only when the Reddis turn from their old mode of life to work in the employ of timber-contractors at the expense of cultivation, that the sphere of collaboration between husband and wife narrows. With agriculture losing its importance and the woman finding little jungle produce in the vicinity of the large villages, she no longer contributes appreciably to the family's food supply. All day the man is away, felling timber and bamboos in the jungle, and the food the family consumes is what the man is paid by his employers. It is plain that such a development must ultimately alter the position of women; for with the man providing the whole of the household's sustenance and engaging in occupations outside the range of woman's experience, she is excluded from the sphere of economic collaboration and must gradually lapse into a position of complete dependence.

Besides their economic interdependence there is often a strong bond of genuine affection between husband and wife, and many a man whose wife remains childless scorns the idea of parting with her or disturbing the harmony of their marriage by taking another wife.

The conduct of village affairs, the application of tribal justice, and the relations with representatives of the Administration, rest almost entirely in the hands of the men, but this does not imply that women never figure prominently in public. At many social functions women play a very important part, and watching a wedding, for instance, one has the impression that the festivities are largely conducted by women. The performance of all public ritual and worship is a prerogative of the men, but there are few rites from which women are expressly excluded, and at domestic rites, such as a girl's first menstruation, they sacrifice animals and address themselves to the gods. One of the clearest symptoms of the independent position of women is, however, the existence of female *veju*[1] or magicians, whose functions and prestige are of the same standing as those of men in contact with the supernatural world.

1. The position of *veju* will be described in Chapter X, pp. 231-237.

With so great an independence in economic and social activities, with the freedom she enjoys in visiting her home village and other villages to attend feasts or for purposes of trade, a married woman has evidently plenty of opportunity to meet other men. The Reddi woman is on the whole not too light of heart or unduly swayed by momentary sexual inclinations, but, if she falls in love with another man, she seldom carries on a secret intrigue but leaves her husband to live openly with her lover. She is recognized as his wife as soon as she is installed in his house, and the break-up of her former marriage leaves no stigma on either party. Both men and women live with their partners as long as they choose, but have little scruple to desert their home if prompted by strong emotions.

Adultery and abduction are offences that call for action by the village elders, and in certain cases even by the *kulam pedda*. If a woman is caught in adultery, her husband may take the law into his own hand and beat her lover soundly; then he informs the headman and elders of the incident. At the subsequent *panchayat* the adulterer is fined Rs. 10 to Rs. 12, and the woman is sternly reprimanded; but her husband is in most cases quite willing to take her back. Similarly a man is fined, though generally only Rs. 5 to Rs. 6, if his wife surprises him with another woman, even if it is an unmarried girl or a widow, and there is thus no aggrieved husband. Once the affair has become public the man is expected to take her into his house, and if she refuses to become his wife all the more blame is laid on his shoulders, since then it is assumed that he must have forced her. Abduction, although the husband is seldom accorded any but nominal compensation, draws forth heavier penalties, and we shall see in the next chapter that most *panchayat* held among the Reddis are concerned with abduction.

If the deceived husband does not lodge a complaint, adultery and desertion, even though they may be common knowledge, sometimes remain unpunished and this suggests that adultery, as indeed most other forms of misconduct, is regarded as a wrong only in so far as the rights of another are infringed; it is, in other words, a civil and not a criminal offence. This attitude is demonstrated by an instance that occurred some years ago in Kakishnur. When Kechel Lachmaya was still quite a young boy, his parents married him to Narpal Gangamma of Munjaluru. But he did not like the girl; he made no attempt to exercise his marital rights and Gangamma, who was several years older found lovers among the other boys of the village and soon had a reputation for promiscuity. One day she was surprised having intercourse with Buzar Kanaya in the jungle; they were both of the same exogamous group, though not of the same clan, and therefore could not marry. But Kanaya who was passionately in love with the girl, defied the rules of exogamy and took her into his house, giving her a sari and some jewels. He was prepared to allay the opposition of the community by paying a

fine to be converted into a feast for the villagers; such an arrangement could probably have been carried through, had not some men of Kakishnur informed the girl's parents of the situation. Thereupon Gangamma's father hastened to Kakishnur and took her away to Munjaluru. There was no question of compensation, for her husband had paid no bride-price and had evidently tolerated his wife's behaviour over a long period. Later Gangamma married another man. No action was taken against Kanaya; he had committed adultery as well as broken the rules of exogamy, but with the removal of the girl, the cause of the trouble, the incident was considered closed.

If there is no other man in the case and a girl, refusing to live any longer with her husband, returns to her parent's house, he may try to recover the bride-price from her father. His chances of success, however, depend on the reason for his wife's desertion and even more on her father's ability to pay. The custom of paying bride-prices seems to be of so recent a date, that there is no generally accepted rule as to the claim of a deceived or deserted husband on its refund.

Neither is there any formal procedure for divorce. A marriage is considered dissolved when the two parties give up their common household and the wife either returns to the parental roof or elopes with another man. Though a man can force his wife to run away by making life unpleasant for her, it seems that it is generally the wife who takes the initiative. This may partly be because a man can conclude a second marriage without separating from his first wife, and partly because a new marriage generally entails expense for a man, while a fairly young divorcée can be almost sure of finding a second husband without incurring any difficulties. If a couple with children splits, the small children stay with the mother, while the father and his relatives take care of the older offspring.

These then are the principles that govern the conduct of husband and wife in a Reddi marriage. Here we have not considered questions of sexual attraction and antipathy, for in this context we are not so much concerned with the psychological reactions of men and women to married life, as with marriage as an institution forming part of the general pattern of Reddi culture.

### *Death and its Social Consequences*

Between a Reddi's marriage, or more precisely between his last marriage, and the time of his death there is in the ordinary course of events no new crisis in his life that evokes public attention. Reddi society knows no age-grades or ranks into which a man may be initiated when increasing in years or prestige. Even the succession of a headman's or *pujari's* son to his father's office occurs as a matter of course and does not give rise to any special procedure. It is only on his last journey

Fig. 60. Woman and child of Kondepudi.

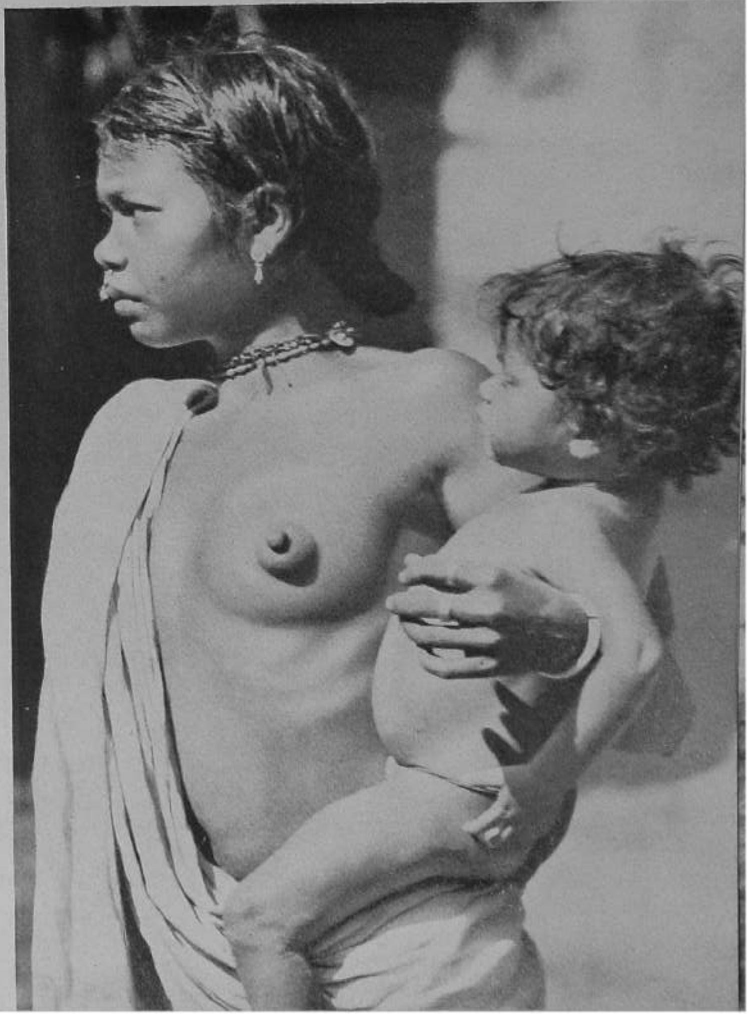
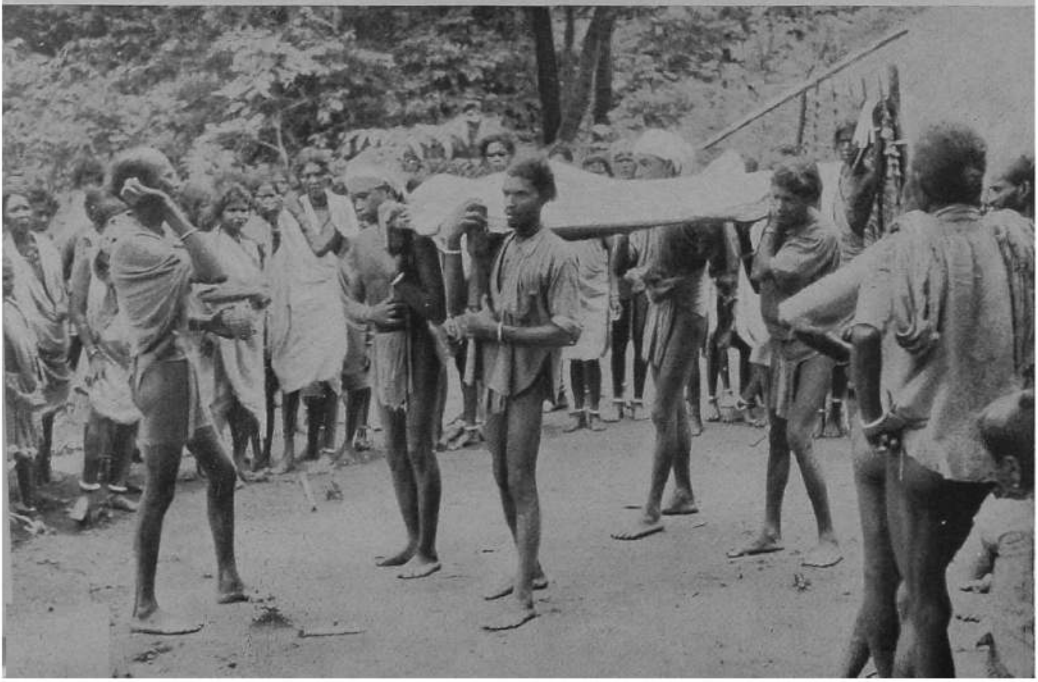


Fig. 61. Gangamma of Gogulapudi with her child.

FIG. 62. Washing the corpse at the funeral.

FIG. 63. The *veju* throws millet over the bier as it starts for the funeral ground.



that a man or woman once more occasions elaborate ceremonial in which the community participates.

When a Reddi is seriously ill his relations call a *veju* or magician, to discover the cause of the disease and arrest its dangerous course. Of the practices employed by *veju* we will learn more in a later chapter; here it suffices to say, that the Reddis recognise three causes of disease and death: natural pain and illness of the body, the wrath of a deity or spirit, and the black magic of an enemy. If one *veju* fails to diagnose and combat the disease, others may be called, but if they too are unable to identify any supernatural cause for the illness, they will come to the conclusion that the trouble is due to some derangement within the body, and declare the case hopeless.

No particular ceremonies surround the last hours of a Reddi; he is allowed to die on the same mat or cot, on which he has lain during his last illness. As soon as life has expired, the women of the household start wailing, and thus the whole village knows of the death. Soon other women join in the demonstrations of grief while several men set out to inform all relatives in neighbouring settlements of the impending funeral.

Nowadays Reddis dispose of their dead both by burying and burning, but there are many indications which render it probable that in the old times earth burial was universal. The general custom in the Northern Hills is to bury the dead. Near every village a piece of jungle is set apart, and here the bodies of men, women and children are laid in the earth, flat on the back with the face turned towards the village and covered with a cloth. The brother of the deceased or failing a brother, the eldest son, throws the first clod of earth into the grave, and when it has been filled in some millet (*sama*) is scattered over the top; this the Reddis say, will grow a few inches high, but seldom ripens as the grave is never cleared of weeds and jungle growth. No food or valuables are buried with the corpse, but sometimes a small amount of cooked grain is placed on top of the grave on the day of the funeral; more is brought after three days and again when the final ceremony for the dead is celebrated. In this area still-born children are buried close to the house and people killed by wild animals or who died by misadventure, are buried wherever their body is found, but with the usual rites. In the Godavari Region it is customary to burn such a corpse on the spot and to omit all ceremonies. But four or five days afterwards a little food is brought to the place by the relatives and hastily thrown away. If a Reddi dies in a village other than his own, his relations are called and come to bury or burn him. The body is never carried back to his home-village.

While the Reddis of the Northern Hills say that it is only Koyas who burn the bodies of people who die a natural death, in the Rampa Country some Reddis also cremate their dead. In Chodavaram village,

for instance, three clans are in the habit of burning their dead, while the other clans bury them. In the Godavari Region both methods are practised concurrently, and the frequency of the one or the other seems to vary from village to village. A curious interpretation of this apparent lack of consistency was volunteered by a man of Katkur, who suggested that those who think a great deal of the gods and make many *puja* are never burnt, but buried; unfortunately he was unable to elucidate this statement and no other Reddi could either confirm or explain it.

In the Godavari Region the head of the corpse, whether for burial or cremation, is orientated towards the south, irrespective of the position of the village; the burial ground always lies beyond a watercourse, but for these customs the Reddis can give no explanation.

The ceremonies and rites accompanying the funeral are to a large extent the same whether the corpse is buried or burnt; and they will be best described by means of a concrete example.

In August 1941, while I was in Gogulapudi two men from the neighbouring village of Mautagudem brought word of the death of Mangamma, the wife of Gurgunta Gangaya; she had died in the early morning and the funeral was to take place that afternoon. Mangamma's home village was Gogulapudi and her younger brother, Kopal Potaya, was still living there (House 1), while her younger sister was married to the *pujari* Golla Lachmaya.

Several men and women of Gogulapudi, but not Lachmaya the brother-in-law of the deceased, started at once for Mautagudem, and I followed them after a short while. Mautagudem lies behind two hills some three and a half miles south of Gogulapudi and is thus the nearest village of any considerable size. It contains ten Reddi houses, and five Koya families.

When I arrived in the village shortly before midday loud wailing came from the house of the deceased. The corpse lay on an upturned cot inside and was covered with a white cloth. Round it squatted the female relations of the dead woman, while other women stood at some distance. Relatives and friends from other neighbouring villages, such as Uparpatla, Chintakŏnda, and Pandarmamidigudem, had already arrived, and while the women keened some men went to prepare the funeral pyre. This task does not fall to any particular relatives, but may be done by any men who volunteer.

In a neighbouring house I found a large group of men and women including both the headman and *pujari*, Gogul Pentaya and his first cousin, Gongul Potaya, all waiting for the funeral to begin. Gongul Potaya, a *veju* of some repute, told me that he had tried to cure Mangamma, but that the gods would not accept any offerings on her behalf; and though both he and other *veju* had tried repeatedly, they had been unable to discover the cause of the disease, which had lasted for several months.

At about 1 p.m. word came that the men had completed the work on the pyre and we all went again to the house of the deceased. Inside the women were still wailing, "they were calling on all the gods, on the *konda devata* and the god who made us," the *veju* told me. Many people stood about outside the house, the men to one side and the women to the other. Before long several women came from the stream carrying pots of water which they put down some twelve yards in front of the house of mourning. The women, three of whom were Koyas and the rest Reddis, brought in all eight pots of various sizes, each with a lump of tumeric stuck to the side.

About that time the wailing stopped and men and women stood about gossiping and laughing. There was no studied gravity, nor mournfulness of expression.

Twenty minutes later the wailing suddenly burst forth with greater intensity, and four men carried the corpse into the open and laid it down on a bundle of straw close to the pots of water. The four bearers were Kopal Potaya, the deceased's younger brother, Gurgunta Viraya, her son-in-law, and Gurgunta Gangaya, and Shanashi, her husband's two brothers. The corpse which the men carried by arms and legs, was naked except for a small cloth covering the loins. Immediately the women surrounded the body, touched it with their foreheads and taking the turmeric from the sides of the pots smeared the corpse with the yellow paste. Then an elderly woman, the deceased's husband's mother's elder sister poured the water from one pot after the other over the dead body (Fig. 62). This was done with as much haste as possible and took only one or two minutes; the last pot was scarcely emptied before the four men lifted the body and took it back into the house.

Inside the corpse was again laid on the cot and covered with a white cloth, which incidentally was not quite new and had belonged to the deceased. The wailing increased for a few minutes, but ceased when the same four men appeared again in the doorway carrying the corpse on the upturned cot. This 'bier' they hoisted on to their shoulders and then stood still in front of the house.

Now the *veju* approached the cot and cut two strings of the webbing with a knife, thus rendering it symbolically useless.[1] Some one handed him a small basket of jawari-millet, which he threw in handfuls on to the corpse (Fig. 63). Silence ensued. Then he addressed the deceased: "Now you are dead; what killed you we do not know. Tell us which *konda devata* or which god killed you? Will the same fate overtake us? But you, you go to your home village."

When the *veju* had finished speaking the cot rocked slightly, and the *veju*, presuming that the deceased woman had caused the move-

1. If the body is carried on a mat, which is the custom in villages where the Reddis have no cots, the *veju* does not cut anything.

ment, spoke to her again: "That does not help us! You will not tell us who killed you; very well, if you will not tell us then go to your home."

It is believed that if the deceased was killed by black magic, the corpse-bearers will be forced to move some steps in the direction of the magician responsible, however far off he may be, but if it was a deity who caused the death they will proceed towards the funeral-place. Here the *veju* did not consider the slight rocking of the bier as an intelligible sign.

After two old women had also thrown some grain on the bier, the procession started towards the cremation ground, the *veju* in front of the corpse-bearers, and behind them first the men and then the women. Leaving the village we crossed a small stream and went a short distance into the jungle till we reached a small clearing where a rectangular funeral pyre had been set up, and on this the corpse was immediately lifted, still covered with the white cloth. The cot, on which the corpse had been carried was thrown away in the jungle, never to be used again. With renewed wailing the women threw themselves on the corpse, embracing it and wetting the cloth with their tears. While the women thus continued their lamentations one of the deceased's brothers-in-law lifted a corner of the cloth covering the body and took off the dead woman's *pustie* and all her jewellery; all these articles he put amongst the logs of the pyre, together with the small knife, with which he cut the strings of beads. In this case the woman's jewels did not comprise anything of value, but I was told that sometimes even valuable ornaments may be burnt with their owners.

Then each mourner took a copper coin and after circling the deceased's head with it threw it on to the pyre. From a pot of cooked millet which had been placed at the head of the pyre, we all took a little grain and scattered it over the corpse. In the case of a small child a leaf-cup with its mother's milk is placed beside the pyre or on the grave; burial seems to be more usual for small children.

While the wailing women withdrew relunctantly, the four corpse-bearers propped additional logs up against the pyre in such a way that they held the corpse in position (Fig. 65). Nearby a fire kindled with a bamboo firesaw had been burning since the arrival of the procession, and from this the brother of the deceased and one of her brothers-in-law took two flaming branches and ran three times round the corpse in opposite directions. Finally they lit the pyre with the branches, thrusting them at intervals in among the piled up stakes, and as smoke and flames began to envelop the corpse, we all left the place and returned to the village. Recrossing the stream we washed our hands and feet, and some men bathed almost the whole body. This was at 2 p.m.

Throughout the funeral the deceased's husband and daughter had

Fig. 64. The *pujari* offers a chicken at the rite of the First Millet Eating.

Fig. 65. The funeral pyre: the logs hold the corpse in place.

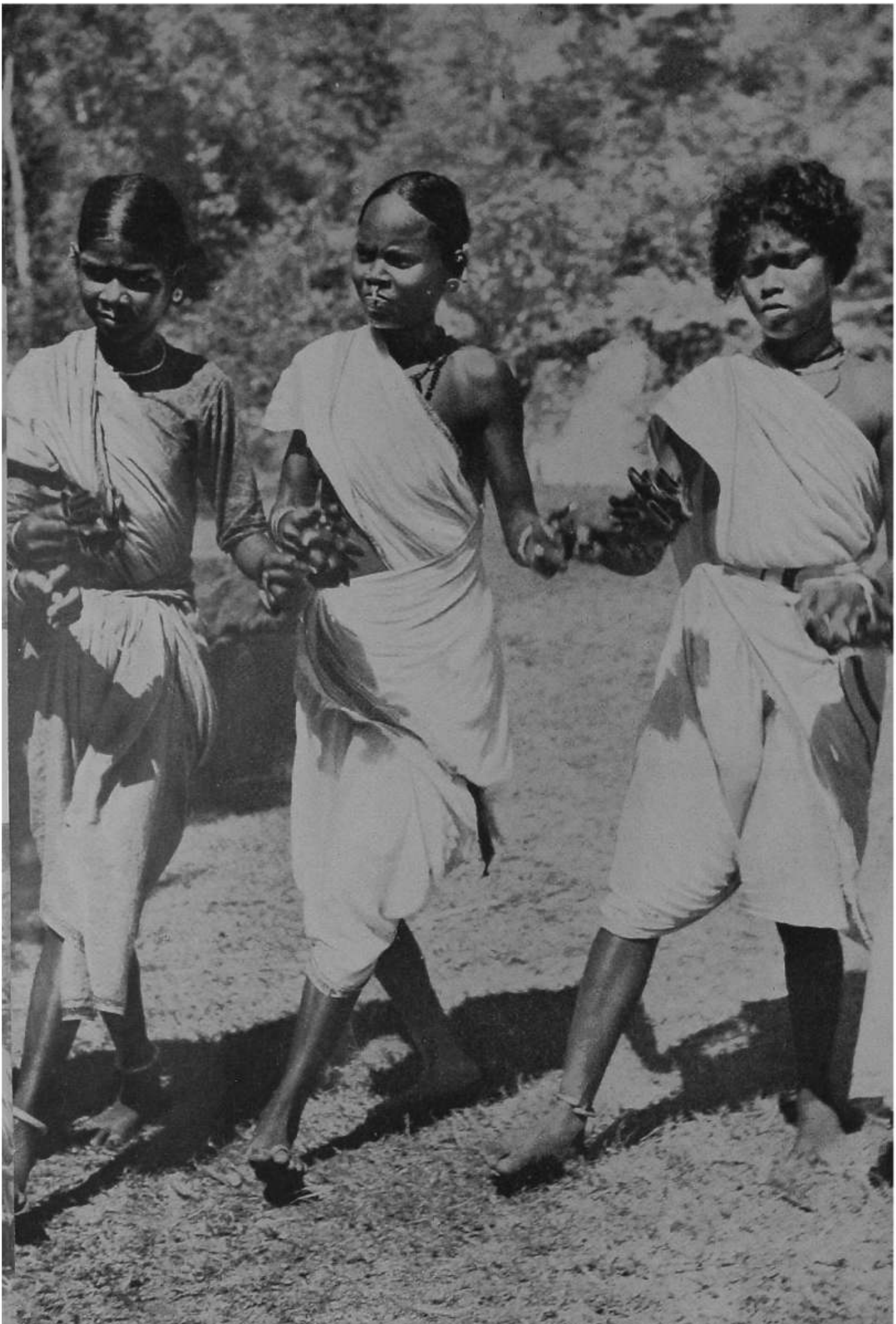


FIG. 66. Women dancing with sword-bean rattles.

not played a prominent role. They returned now to their house together with several closely related women, who continued wailing in slightly more subdued tones. There was no meal after the funeral, and the friends and most of the relatives from other villages left within half an hour.

Three weeks later the *pedda dinam,* the funeral feast, was held, but because of the meagre means of the deceased's family it was a very modest ceremony. On the first day the women of the house cooked some *sama* and dal, and when it was ready called the *veju* Gongul Potaya, who placed the food on some leaves arranged near an inside wall of the house. The *veju* sat for a while in front of the leaves: he spoke to the spirit of the dead woman asking her the cause of her death; those present heard only the words of the *veju,* but he heard the voices of the dead woman and of a god (*devudu*), who, as he told us afterwards, had revealed that it was not black-magic that had brought about her death, a *devudu* had called her and she was now staying in the *devudu's* place.[1] The women of the deceased's family then took the food to the jungle and placed it under a large *pala* tree.[2]

Next day, Kopal Potaya, the deceased's brother, killed a chicken and, when the women had cooked it, he and the nearest relatives took one leg and some rice, curry and dal, and went first to the burial ground, where each mourner put down a small quantity of the rice and curry without uttering a prayer or addressing the deceased.[3] On their way back the women placed the chicken's leg and some cooked dal under the same *pala* tree. Nobody could give me any reason why food was placed under that particular tree, and I was told that it does not matter whether it is devoured by birds or dogs.

Finally all the assembled relations, some of whom had come from neighbouring villages, sat down to a meal of millet curry, bamboo-shoots and dal.

If the deceased leaves a widow, it is on the day of the *pedda dinam* that she breaks her glass-bangles and takes off her *pustie;* if she has a daughter she may give it to the girl to be kept for her wedding, but only a poor bride-groom will consent to use such a *pustie.*

From the addressing of the deceased before the burial, the scattering of cooked grain over the pyre, and particularly the offering of food during the *pedda dinam,* it is evident that the Reddis believe in the survival of some part of man after his bodily death. Their ideas on the circumstances of this survival are extremely hazy, however, hazier indeed than that of any other primitive tribe, with whom I have come in contact. A very old and by no means unintelligent man of Telladi-

1. Reddis do not often refer to their own deities as *devudu* and the belief that the departed go to any deity's place is not universally held.

2. *Mimusops hexandra.*

3. Sometimes a small shelter is erected on the burial ground and the food placed under it.

bala complained pathetically: "Although we make so many *puja* and give so many offerings to the gods, when we die what good does it do us? We do not know what will happen to us,—only that we will be buried."

Many Reddis say flatly that they have no idea of their fate after death; others proffer vague suggestions of which they themselves seem only half convinced. A man of Mamidivada told me that whenever he had any particularly good food he put some of it on a leaf, kept it for some time in a corner of his house and then placed it on the path outside the village for his deceased father, who had died many years ago. For he believed that the dead stay in the jungle.

In areas where Hindu influence is strong, Reddis often say that the dead go to "god" (*devudu*), and if one enquires to which god, they often mention Bhagavantaru; one man of Kondepudi told me that the dead are with Brahma Devi, a name I never heard on the lips of any other Reddi.

It appears that the conception of a soul as a principle different from the body is foreign to the Reddis. They do believe in the survival of the personality, but do not talk of a soul or spirit surviving. Though they understand the word *jiv,* they do not seem ever to use it among themselves; talking of their dead relatives to whom they give food at the time of certain ceremonies, they refer to them as *peddalu,* 'big people, elders,' or as *sestavaru,* 'the dead;' never will a Reddi speak of the 'souls of the Departed' or the 'ancestor spirits.' My tentative suggestion, that the *jiv* of a dead man may be born again in a child of his family, caused hilarity; the idea was evidently foreign to my informants. The absence of any truly animistic conceptions is noticeable also in the practices of *veju* or magicians; although these men and women are credited with the power of conversing with and even seeing deities in their trances, they never talk of their 'soul' journeying through the supernatural world, while their body is unconscious; and in this they differ from all magicians and medicine men of the shamanistic type.

Yet there is a definite belief that the Deparated are entitled to be fed on certain occasions by their living relatives. But we would probably deceive ourselves, if we described these acts of piety, as 'ancestor-worship' or even a 'cult of the dead.' No prayers for help are addressed to the dead nor is it believed that they can influence the fate of the living. The dead for whom food is set aside are always the nearest relatives, such as parents or brothers and sisters, never persons who are not clearly and affectionately remembered, and the attitude prompting the offering of food is perhaps not very different from that which leads many other races to decorate graves with flowers and wreaths.

Nothing in the Reddis' funeral customs is suggestive of any fear of

the dead; there is no conscious attempt to prevent the dead from returning to the habitations of the living, for though the custom of burying or burning them beyond a stream may owe its origin to such an endeavour, the Reddis today refute the idea. The throwing away of the cot used as a bier and of the knife used to sever the deceased's necklaces, the destruction of the pot with the cooked millet and the washing on the way home seem to bespeak a belief in the contagiousness of death.

Yet there are certain cases when a deceased man or woman is believed to spell danger to the living and there are various means to combat this eventuality. When Ventla Lachmaya (Fig. 46), an old man of Parantapalli died and was buried, the earth over his grave did not seem to settle in the usual manner and people began to whisper that his body had not decomposed and would rise again from the grave. So the villagers planned to drive a pointed stake into the ground through the chest of the corpse. To convince themselves of the need of such action they first dug a hole at the end of the grave; the smell of rotting flesh which rose satisfied them that decomposition had set in and they gave up the idea of pinning the corpse down with a stake.

If a man dies in great pain or on account of black magic there is the likelihood that he may become an evil spirit, a *dayam* or *gali*. His relatives or co-villagers soon realize his fate by such strange appearances as a wild dog behaving in an unusual manner, a bush moving of itself, or stones falling from nowhere. To come face to face with a *gali* means certain death; the sight strikes terror into the victim and as he sinks to the ground, the *gali* pounces on him and he dies within a few moments. Others who are present do not see the *gali* and they are unable to help the stricken man. As soon as it is suspected that a deceased person has become a *dayam* or *gali*, a magician is called to banish the danger; and if he knows the appropriate *mantra* he will succeed in driving the *gali* into the forest and henceforth the villagers will remain unmolested.

No less feared than a *gali* is a woman who has died in pregnancy or during parturition before the child was born. Such a *kamini bhutam* hovers about the funeral ground and can at times be heard crying and moaning. There is only one way of ridding the living of her dangerous presence: a *veju* accompanied by several men must ascend a hill and pray to its *konda devata* to lead the ghost up into the branches of some high tree; when the *veju* is satisfied that the *kamini bhutam* is in the tree, thorny branches are heaped round the trunk; thus unable to descent the *kamini bhutam* remains for ever in the tree, no longer a menace to the living.

Reddis do not seem afraid of those who died by their own hand. Cases of suicide are, however, rare and I heard only of one concrete incident; a woman of Katkur had long suffered from a wound on her leg infested by worms and despairing of a cure drowned herself in the

Godavari. This was many years ago and Madi Zogreddi, the *kulam pedda,* who told me of this suicide, added that he himself had never known a man or woman who committed suicide.

Let us now turn to the social consequences of a death in a Reddi household. If the deceased was either an unmarried son or daughter, or an aged widow or widower, living in the house of younger relatives, these consequences are not very great. But the death of the head of a household gives rise to a number of important problems, involving the fate of his widow and children, as well as the disposal of his property.

A young childless widow almost invariably returns to her home-village, where she will stay with her parents or any other relations. There is no definite period of mourning and she is at liberty to marry again as soon as the *pustie* of the first marriage is removed and her bangles broken at the *pedda dinam*; and it is said that if she is an attractive young woman, a new suitor may be waiting for that moment, and immediately carry her off as his wife. Should a younger brother of her deceased husband like to marry her and she be willing, he may do so, but there is no obligation on either part; an elder brother may not marry the wife of a deceased younger brother, but a man may marry his wife's elder sister.

Widows with small children often take their children to their home-village to live with her own relations, and many a Reddi grows up in the house of his maternal grandparents or his mother's brother. Three cases will serve to illustrate this. In one house in Parantapalli (House 8) lived two brothers of Vinel clan, two of whose sisters had been married to men of Murle clan of Tekpalli. When after a few years of marriage the husbands died; the two widows with their young children returned to their home-village Parantapalli, where they had since been supported by their brothers. Their sons continued to live in their maternal uncle's house, although one of them was already married, and neither of them thought of moving to Tekpalli, the village of their fathers. A similar case was that of the two sisters' sons of Buzar Potreddi of Kakishnur (House 28). Their mother married a second time and went to live in Daravaram, but Potreddi, their maternal uncle, brought up both the boys in his house and even bore the expenses for their wedding. Incidentally the elder boy married Potreddi's brother's daughter, *i.e.,* his cross-cousin. The third case is from Patakota in the Northern Hills. The *veju,* Karpala Balaya, was born in Buradavalasa, but at his parents' death, his mother's brother took him to Patakota, and when Balaya grew up his uncle married him to his daughter.

If a widow is left with bigger children, however, and particularly if there are boys among them, she may continue to live in her late husband's house, and make a living as best as she can, until her sons

are old enough to work. When her children are grown up and married, a widow chooses to live more often with one of her daughters than in the house of a son, possibly owing to the notoriously unhappy relations between mother and daughter-in-law. An aged widow who has no surviving children will find refuge in the house of a brother, a brother's son or the husband of one of her sisters. The tie between brother and sister appears to be particularly strong, and perhaps this accounts for the fact that a man more often supports his sister's children than his brother's.

The above examples demonstrate that orphans are frequently looked after by their mother's relatives; but orphans with married brothers or sisters will probably live in their houses till old enough to to marry. Adoption involving the change of clan name is unknown, and a man cannot leave property of value to a sister's son as long as he has any agnate male relations.

In Siramkota in the Northern Hills I heard of a rather extraordinary case of two orphans carrying on their parents' household by themselves. Murle Bulamma, a married woman, told me the story of her childhood. When her parents died she was very small and her brother was not more than eleven, but having no close relations they continued to live in their parents' house; her brother helped other villagers with their works and they gave him grain, and she collected roots and herbs in the jungle and cooked them together with whatever her brother brought home. She emphasized how well her brother looked after her and that even when he took a wife she stayed in his house till her own marriage. For his wedding the other villagers lent her brother Rs. 4 and 32 seers of grain, which in later years he gradually repaid.

Widowers, unless very old, seldom remain single for long, and since the expectation of life seems to be greater for women than for men, they have generally no difficulty in finding a second or third wife. I know only of one widower who, though fairly young, has not married again (Kakishnur House 13); his daughter of about thirteen did the housework, but he agreed that if she married, he and his small son would find life difficult.

The question of inheritance has assumed importance only with the development of permanent cultivation. Reddis who live in the hills and subsist mainly on shifting cultivation possess little to leave to their heirs. They have no personal property in land and their household goods are generally of little value. If the widow or any children of the deceased continue to live in his house, they go on using his material possessions as before, but if the house is abandoned and the widow returns to her own family or remarrying goes to live in her new husband's house, the movable property will be taken by the sons, or, failing sons, by the deceased's brothers or other paternal relatives. Cattle is divided

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equally among the sons, but where equal division is impossible the eldest son gets the biggest share. Daughters do not as a rule inherit, though if unmarried they are allowed to take those household utensils which they used before their bereavement. Even a woman's ornaments do not pass automatically to her daughters; they are the property of her husband and revert to him or to his family at the woman's death, though those bestowed on children during life are recognised as gifts, and ornaments of little value are buried or burnt with the corpse. A widow who returns to her home-village may take with her only such household-goods or valuable ornaments as were given to her by her own family; the others go to her husband's heirs.

In places where the Reddis possess permanent fields of appreciable value succession to property is naturally a matter of some importance. The principle that all sons share in the father's property while daughters do not inherit prevails here too, but the distribution of the heritage varies from one locality to the other. According to Karkal Bhimreddi, the *kulam pedda* of all Reddi villages on the left Godavari bank above the gorge, the eldest son should get a double share of the property, but the father's house may be taken by any of the sons. Usually the division of the property takes place immediately after the *pedda dinam,* the memorial ceremony for the deceased, when the village elders arbitrate in the matter and are entertained by the heirs. Sometimes it happens, however, that the sons decide to work the father's estate jointly and divide harvests into equal parts. In Kakishnur the estate of the headmen Buzar Zogreddi, who died several years ago, was not divided for many years and his widow and sons shared in the usufruct. Another man of Kakishnur, Buzar Lachmaya (House 7), told me that he and his elder brother cultivated their father's fields together and if both of them were to have sons, these sons would again work the fields jointly.

In those parts of the Northern Hills where plough-cultivation on permanent fields is practised, the rules of succession to land are very much the same. Let us take an example from Patakota. When the headman of the village died some years ago he left a widow and three young sons. Since the sons were still too small to cultivate the father's rice fields, the widow made an arrangement with two men, whereby they cultivated her late husband's land against a share of the crop. Now that her sons have grown up, they cultivate the land together and share the crop.

Though a widow has no claim to any part of her husband's property, as long as she continues to live in his house she is entitled to be maintained out of his estate and cared for by her sons, and during her life-time may keep any valuable ornaments given to her by her husband. We have seen, however, that she often prefers to live with a married daughter.

If a man dies without a male heir, his property goes to his brothers or their sons, and failing these to his nearest agnates. Relatives on the maternal side are not supposed to inherit, but if a man grew up in his mother's village and has no paternal relatives in the vicinity, his household-goods will probably be taken by his nearest cognate relatives, but distant kinsmen on the father's side are likely to stake their claim on fields or cattle.

Few Reddis leave cash, but should such an unusual thing happen, the money would probably be divided equally among the sons. It is much more frequent that a man dies with debts to a local merchant or money-lender and for these his sons are made liable even if the father's estate was worth only a minute fraction of the debts. This problem, with all its far-reaching implications, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter XIV.

## CHAPTER IX

# SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

NOW that we have gained an insight into the nature of the family and the conduct customary between close kinsmen, we can turn to those larger units that comprise several households and kin-groups and form the frame-work for the regulation of all social relations between the individual families. Besides being born into one kin-group and being allied by marriage with another, every man or woman is also a member of a village-community and of a clan, and these two units are, together with the family, the main pivots of Reddi society. Throughout the tribe the functions of village-community and clan are fundamentally the same, but different economic conditions as well as contacts with various other populations have caused divergent developments in their organization, in their manifestation in ceremonial and ritual activities, and in their degree of cohesion.

### *The Village Community*

Let us first consider the village-community as it exists in the remoteness of the hills where *podu*-cultivation and food-gathering are the principal means of subsistence and contact with people of other castes is the exception rather than the rule. Here it consists of a number of families in common possession of a tract of land which act collectively on ceremonial occasions, but do not necessarily live on one village site. While economically a self-contained unit, a village-community entertains marriage relations with other village communities and is thus clearly part of a larger social organism.

A village-community in the hills may number only four or five households, all concentrated in one place, or it may comprise as many as twenty-five or thirty families distributed over several settlements. The heads of the individual families are either born in the locality, in which case their membership in the community and their rights in the land were acquired automatically or they have immigrated to the village with the common consent of the rest of the community later in life. For a village is neither a rigid unit nor exclusive in its composition; new-comers are generally welcomed if they choose to settle, and once accepted as members of the community they are entitled to the usufruct of the land and enjoy equal rights with those born in the locality. If, on the other hand, a man emigrates his sons do not inherit any right in the land of his home-village; should they want to return, they must ask

the inhabitants for permission to settle, like any other newcomer.

The members of a village-community, however small, are rarely all of the same exogamous clan, and marriages within the community are therefore possible, although it is more common for a man to take a wife from a neighbouring village. When a village is newly founded, the first settlers may all be members of the same clan; but such a position seldom persists very long; young couples often go to live in the wife's village and this practice soon brings men of other clans into the new settlement. There can be little doubt that most village communities were originally groups of families closely related by ties of blood and marriage, and this type of settlement still predominates in the interior of the hills.

Let us return to our previous example, the twin-village of Gogulapudi-Dornalpushe and analyse its sociological structure.[1] Though the two settlements are known by different names, they constitute a single community, which functions as one unit on all ritual and social occasions. The composition of hill-villages is seldom constant and there were considerable changes in the distribution of families between my first visit to Gogulapudi in February and the time when I left the village in October, 1941. But the complete break-up of the village in 1943 mentioned in Chapter XV was no natural development, but was caused by the prohibition of *podu*-cultivation by the Forest authorities.

In October 1941 Gogulapudi consisted of four houses. The largest of these (House 1) belonged to Golla Lachmaya,[2] the *pujari* and the religious representative of the community. He had three wives, Patla Gangamma from Jorumamulu, a small village about two miles to the south, Kopal Gangamma of Gogulapudi, and Gurgunta Bulamma of Mautagudem, a village just across the border in Polavaram Taluq. He had only two surviving children, a daughter, who was married to Gurgunta Viraya of Dornalpushe (House 5), and a small son about four years old.

House 2 belonged to Golla Potaya, the brother of Lachmaya, who, although the younger brother, acted as the headman (*patel*) in all the community's dealings with outsiders. He was married to Boli Gangamma of Pandimamidi, who is his father's sister's daughter, and he shared his house and cultivated his field with his wife's brother Boli Kanaya, who used to live in Siddharam and had only recently settled in Gogulapudi, which is incidentally his mother's village.

An abandoned house belonged to Golla Gangaya, the youngest brother of Lachmaya and Potaya, who during my first visit had still lived in Gogulapudi, but had subsequently quarrelled with his brothers and gone to live with his father-in-law in Dornalpushe (House 5).

House 3 was inhabited by Boli Gangaya from Chintakonda, the

1. Cf. the house-list, pp. 352-354.

2. The first name is the clan-name, which always precedes the personal name.

father's brother's son of Boli Kanaya; his wife was Patla Komamma of Gogulapudi who had been married previously to a man of Gogulapudi, and both Komamma's unmarried son by her first husband as well as her mother lived in the house. There were moreover the widow Gongula Viramma of Gogulapudi, the mother of Gurgunta Kanaya (House 7), and her small son by a second husband, who, though not closely related to Boli Gangaya or his wife, were staying in their house.

The fourth of the inhabited houses had recently been built by Boli Komaya, the brother of Boli Kanaya (House 2), who had also immigrated from Siddharam. Until the end of August he and his two wives had shared the house of Golla Lachmaya, his mother's brother's son, with whom he jointly cultivates one large field.

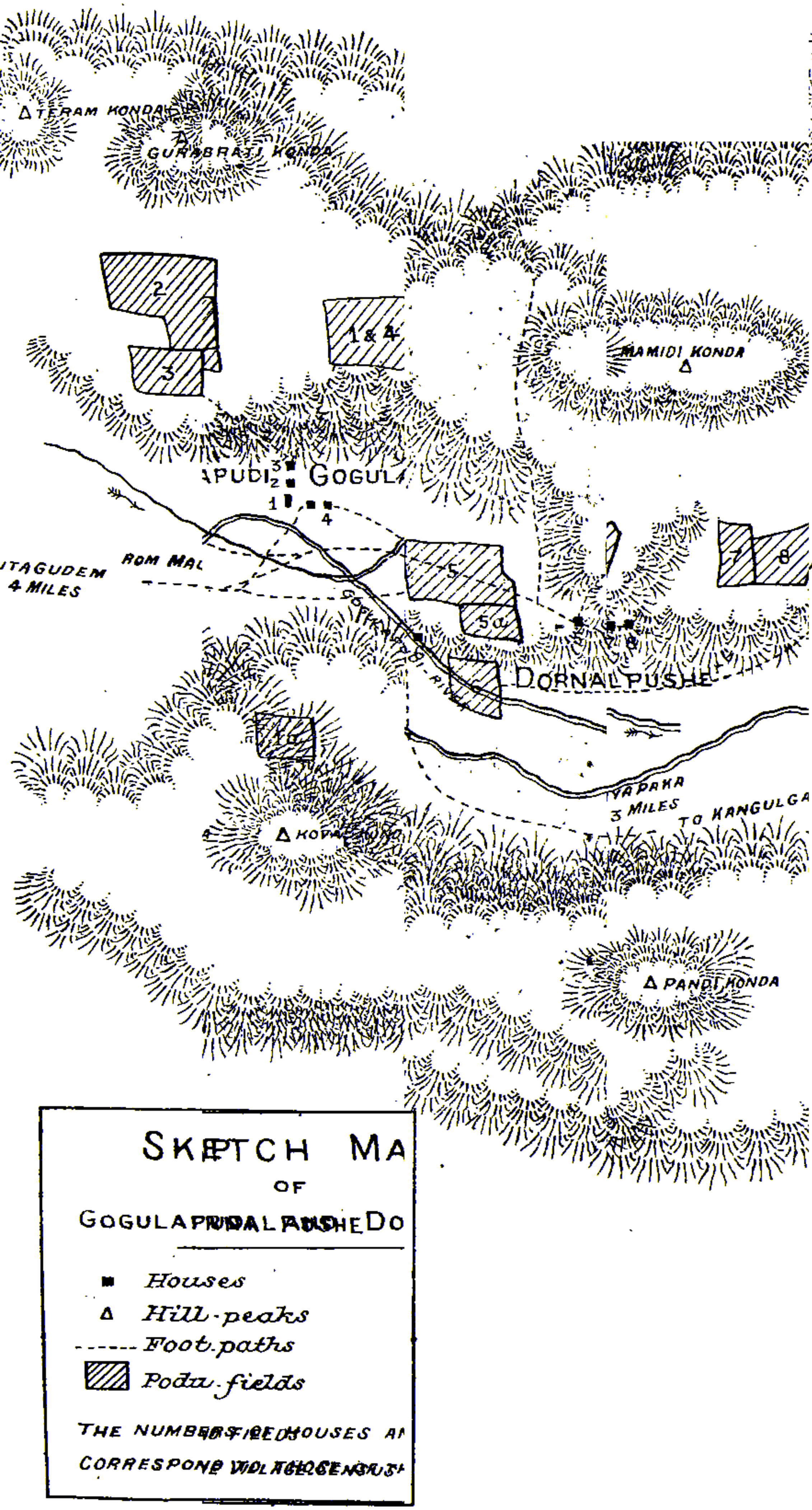
Thus we see that all the four households of the settlement of Gogulapudi were composed of inter-related families and the situation in the three hamlets of Dornalpushe was much the same.

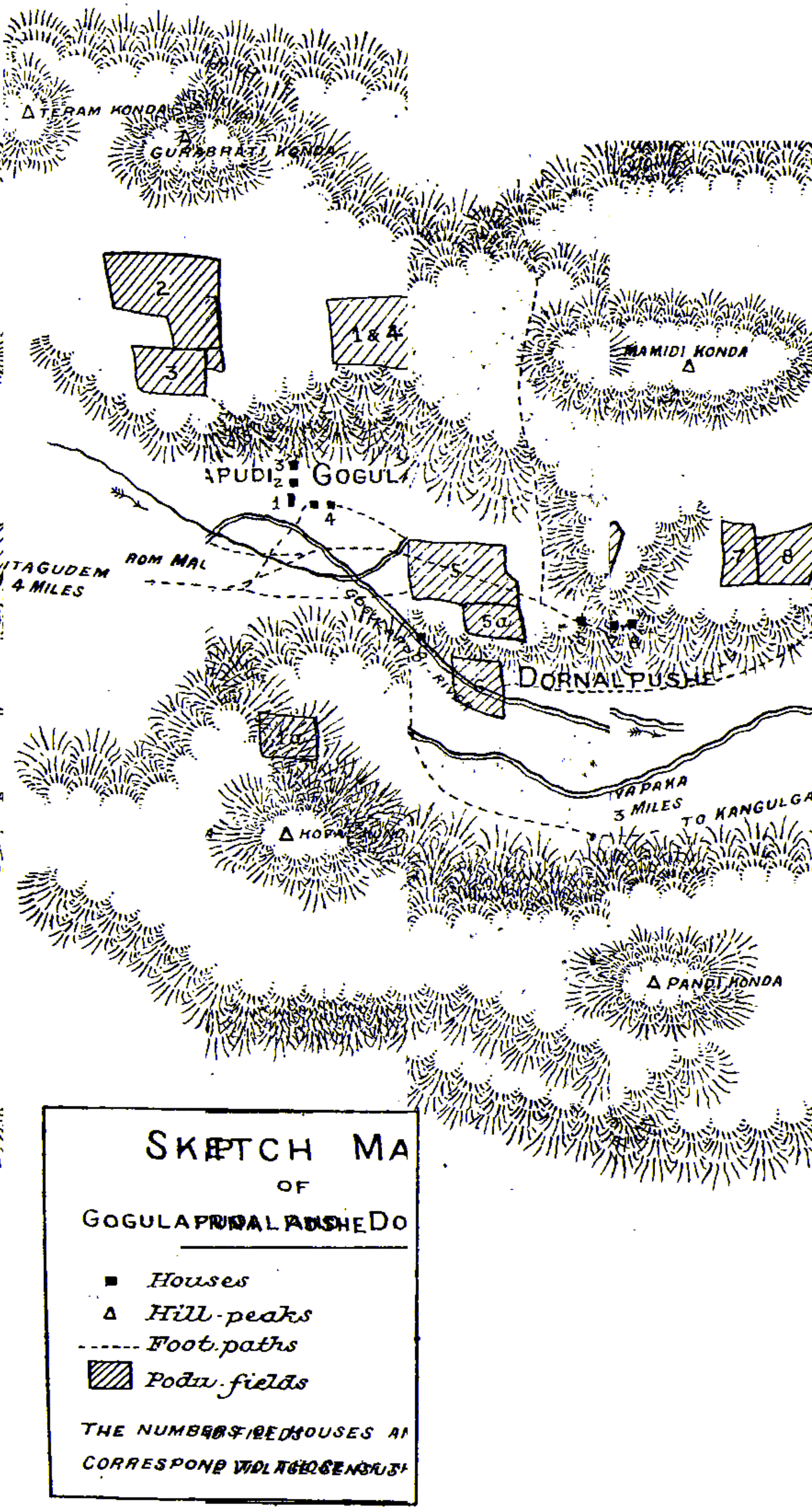
House 5 belonged to Gurgunta Chinnaya, who was born in Pantapalli, while his wife, Divita Potamma, was from the now abandoned village of Venchela. All of his six children, including one married son and two married daughters still lived under his roof. His son's wife was the daughter of Golla Lachmaya (House 1) and his sons-in-law were Golla Gangaya, the younger brother of Golla Lachmaya, and Patla Gangaya from Chintakonda.

The next house of Dornalpushe (House 6) stood at a small distance from House 5 and was surrounded by thick jungle. During my first visit it had sheltered two families, but afterwards the owner, Gurgunta Lachmaya, the brother's son of Chinnaya (House 6), went to live in his wife's village Mautagudem, where he started cultivating with his brother-in-law. His house was thus left in the hands of Gurgunta Pandaya, to whom Lachmaya had offered hospitality when one year previously he had left his home-village Chintakonda. Pandaya had come to live in Dornalpushe because, as he explained, his wife, the sister of Divati Potamma (House 5), did not like living in Chintakonda where she had no relations.

The other three houses of Dornalpushe, which stood together in a small cluster less than half a mile away, were inhabited by three families of the Gurgunta clan, all closely related. Gurgunta Lachmaya, the elder brother of Chinnaya (House 5) died between my two visits, but his widow and children continued to live in the house (House 7). House 8 was owned by Gurgunta Kanaya, who was the deceased's brother's son; and the owner of House 9, also Kanaya by name, was the younger brother of both Chinnaya (House 5) and Lachmaya (House 7).

Just as Gogulapudi is inhabited by men of Golla clan or men related to the Golla people by marriage, so Dornalpushe is clearly a settlement of Gurgunta folk, who settled there only one generation


TERAM KONDA
GURABRATI KONDA
MAMIDI KONDA
1 & 4
GOGUL
DORNALPUSHE
4 MILES
3 MILES
TO KANGULGA
PANDI KONDA
SKETCH MA
OF
Houses
Hill-peaks
Foot-paths
Poda fields



ago. Golla and Gungunta people appear today as the owners of the village land, but they claim no exclusive rights of possession and have recently given shelter to several men of other clans. With the one exception of Boli Gangaya, these immigrants were, however, related by maternal descent to the original villagers and were thus all the more acceptable as new members of that community.

The social structure of Gogulapudi is typical of the hill-villages both south and north of the Godavari. It could be matched by many instances from the Northern Hills, where an almost exact parallel is afforded by the village-community embracing the settlements of Rakota and Mamidivada, in the Gurtedu *mutta,* both in regard to the scattered situation of the houses and to the predominance of two intermarrying clans.

The ties between the members of such communities are naturally very close; services rendered are of a casual character and not prescribed by traditional obligation and the benefits of co-operation among the members are at once extended to any newcomer accepted into the community—the villagers help him to build a house and according to their means lend him grain until he has raised his first crop, on the understanding that he will repay the loans in kind as soon as he is able to do so.

The atmosphere within the village community is intensely democratic; each member has equal rights, and the leadership of the hereditary head of the village, usually a descendant of the village founder, lies mainly in the religious field. He enjoys no privileges and exercises no authority over his fellow-villagers; he presides over *panchayat,* but his decisions must be endorsed by the opinion of the community. When talking among themselves the Reddis of the Godavari Region describe this headman as *pedda kapu,*[1] but in conversation with outsiders they refer to him as *patel,* and this is the designation by which the representative of the village is known to the officers of the Administration. Similarly the Reddi village headmen in Chodavaram and Ellavaram are called *munsif,*[2] which is the term used also for the headmen of Telugu villages in that area. The younger brother or nearest male relative of the *pedda kapu* acts as his assistant and substitute in case of his absence from the village, and is called *pinna pedda.* Sometimes the *pinna pedda,* and not the *pedda kapu* represents the community in its dealings with outsiders, and appears then as *patel* and, to the superficial observer, as "headman" of the village. Thus in Gogulapudi it is not Golla Lachmaya, the *pedda kapu* and *pujari* who functions as *patel,* but his younger brother Potaya, the *pinna pedda.*

The main function of the hereditary head of the village, is that of mediator between man and the supernatural powers; as *pujari* he

1. *Pedda kapu,* meaning literally "great peasant," is a term widely used in Telingana for the village-headman.

2. *Munsif* means in Urdu 'judge.'

performs those rites and ceremonies that are believed to secure the prosperity of the community as a whole. And since this prosperity is intimately linked with the thriving of the crops, it is above all the agricultural rites that call for the intercession of the *pujari*. He must inaugurate the sowing of the grain, propitiate the earth-deity with sacrifices and perform the rites at the great annual feasts. On the other hand individual ceremonies, such as offerings during times of sickness, do not fall within the scope of his duties, but are the task of the *veju* or magician.

In the small hill-settlements the functions of *pujari* are the logical outcome of his position as descendant of the village founder, but in the large settlements of the Godavari valley the situation is no longer as simple.

Let us first consider the circumstances which led to the formation of these villages. As long as the Reddis subsisted solely on shifting cultivation and food-gathering they lived of necessity in small settlements loosely scattered over the jungle, which contributed liberally to their food supply. Originally small settlements of similar type must have existed also in the valley of the Godavari, wherever pockets of alluvial soil indent the steep hills. The larger villages which we find today only developed when a radical change of economic system allowed for the concentration of considerable populations in one place. Such a change seems to have taken place when the Reddis took up plough-cultivation and began to engage in forest-labour (cf. Chapter XII).

If we turn to Appendix III we realise at once the very different nature of these large villages. In Parantapalli, where there are only ten houses, the changed inter-relation of the householders is already very marked, but in Kakishnur, with its forty-seven houses dispersed over three settlements, the composition of the village community bears little or no resemblance to the old order.

### *Village Government and Jurisdiction*

What are the repercussions of this new development on the structure of Reddi society? The village-community has ceased to be a small grouping of inter-related families, and has in many instances assumed such large proportions that there is no longer the same intimate contact between its members. Families from many villages and of many clans forgathered, and instead of sentimental kinship ties, it is common economic interest which welds the members into a community. Yet certain essential characteristics of the old order remain: the hill-slopes are still considered commonable property, and all members, whether native or immigrant, enjoy social equality and act as a body in ceremonial matters. The religious leadership has been retained by the family of the original village-founder, even if his clan has lost its numerical superiority and social prominence. But, while in small hill-

villages the secular power of the headman and *pujari* is largely nominal and his function as spokesman and representative of the community in its dealings with outsiders calls for little skill or personal authority, large villages require able leadership and sound judgment, qualities which the *pujari* who accedes to his office by virtue of his birth, and not on account of personal merit, does not always possess. Consequently the functions of headman and *pujari* have, whether by outside intervention or internal arrangement, often become separated. In some cases both dignities have remained in the same family, the eldest descendant of the village-founder in the direct line continuing to act as *pujari*, while a capable man of a younger branch was chosen as headman. But sometimes the separation was complete, and the dignity of headman passed to the member of another clan.

An instructive example of this separation of functions is afforded by the village of Kakishnur. Here both the priestship and the headmanship are hereditary in the Buzar clan. In the last generation there were two brothers, of whom the elder functioned as *pujari*, while the younger, Zogreddi, a man with great personal authority, acted as headman. When the brothers died, each was succeeded by his eldest son. But Zogreddi's son, now *patel* of Kakishnur was a young and rather insignificant youth, who had practically no authority and took little interest in village affairs. The actual leadership of the village had therefore passed, or was in the process of passing, to the energetic and intelligent Andel Kanaya, who has no hereditary claim, but " speaks well " and has much personal influence and authority. During his lifetime the late *patel* often employed Andel Kanaya as messenger and go-between in the negotiation of marriages, and his ability and powers of oratory gradually secured him his present position as the spokesman of the community. He is described simply as " *pedda* " (big man) and functions in the settlement of disputes arising within the community as well as in negotiations with other villages. It seems inevitable that ultimately Andel Kanaya will be recognized as the actual headman of Kakishnur and then, should he have a son of equal ability, it is probable that at his death this son will be accepted by the community as his successor.

In Koinda and Katkur the process observable in its transitory stages in Kakishnur is already an accomplished fact, for in these villages the priestship and the headmanship, both hereditary functions are vested in different clans. On the other hand there are certain large villages, such as Tekpalli and Kondepudi, where both functions are centred in one man. And in such newly founded villages as Tellidibala and Balamamidi, the functions of *pujari* and headman are undivided and still lie in the hands of the original village founder.

The status of the secular headman in a large village is not easy to define, for a headman's position varies from village to village, according

to circumstance and individual personality. His privileges as prescribed by custom are few and of little practical consequence; he receives no form of tribute from the other villagers and is not entitled to free labour or any other form of service.[1] When the village council, which he convenes and over which he presides, imposes a fine on a law-breaker, and this fine is converted into food and drink for the assembly, the headman is served first and receives a somewhat larger share than the other members, but this is rather an honour than a benefit.

The village council is not an exclusive body, but an informal gathering of all the householders in which the voice of the elders carries most weight. When an aggrieved party lodges a complaint with the headman, he must summon the villagers for a discussion of the matter. As soon as possible the men assemble at any convenient place: in the piazza in the headman's courtyard or outside under a shady tree. Such meetings are called *guti* but *panchayat,* the general Indian term for village council is also known and used.

Serious crime is nowadays dealt with by the police authorities, and the cases subject to the jurisdiction of the headman and village-elders are generally of a petty or civil character. There remains not even the memory of the sanctions which a village-council would impose when called upon to punish a murderer, and although murders have occurred in recent years, and the murderers have continued to live in Reddi villages, no action was taken against them by the villagers (cf. p. 212). Today disputes over women and marriage-dues constitute the majority of cases; but breaches of the laws of exogamy and caste offences, such as sex-relations or inter-dining with persons of lower caste, are also dealt with by the village council. Cases of theft seem to be rare. If a thief is caught lifting part of another man's crop, pilfering a vegetable garden, or stealing a brass vessel or agricultural implement, he is fined a sum of between Re. 1 and Rs. 5 and warned by the headman. Disputes over land cannot occur as long as all land is common property, but even in villages where individuals own permanent fields, quarrels over boundaries and questions of possession never seem to come before the village councils; they are considered matters for the Revenue Authorities, but the partition of a man's estate is arranged with the help of the village elders on the day of the memorial feast.

Sex-relations between members of the same clan are considered a serious offence. In the Godavari Region I never heard of a concrete case, but was told that a man guilty of such a crime would be excommunicated and fined Rs. 6. The immediate result of the excommunication would be that he could not enter any Reddi house and that no Reddi would eat with him or accept food cooked in his house. But if he were willing to break off his incestuous intrigue and bear the expenses of a feast

1. Village headmen in the Reddi country are not paid by Government.

he could be purified and reaccepted into the tribe. Much the same rule prevails in the Northern Hills and there I came across a concrete case of clan-incest. In Mamidivada, one of the remote and isolated hill-settlements, a man of Palal clan lived with a Palal woman, who was his classificatory brother's daughter. All the people of his village refused to eat with him and some did not even admit him to their houses. When discussing the case in Bodlanka, a village two days' journey from Mamidivada, I was told that if a similar case occurred there the guilty couple would be expelled from the village. The purification ceremony, which must precede re-acceptance into the tribe, is here particularly expensive: it necessitates the giving of a large tribal feast and the presence of a man of Jangam caste (cf. pp. 252-253), who burns the offender's tongue with a piece of heated gold.

A more lenient view of a break of the rules of exogamy is taken if the man and women do not belong to the same clan, but to 'brother-clans.' In this case their offence may be condoned, if the man is prepared to bear the expenses of a feast for the village-community. No purification ceremony is required and once the feast has been given no further obstacles stand in the couple's way and their union is recognized by the community.

Cases of adultery and abduction are generally the concern of members of different villages, and there are several ways by which the offender is brought to justice. If a married woman has eloped with a man of a neighbouring village, the aggrieved husband, accompanied by the headman and several responsible men of his village, may set out for the village of the offender and lodge a complaint with the headman, asking him to summon a *panchayat*. The headman of the offender's village will generally comply with their demand and will prepare food and drink for the members of the council, the expense of which he afterwards recovers from the culprit. Both headmen together with the older men of the two villages will then discuss the matter and the abductor will be asked to pay a fine. If he agrees and is able to raise the money, which he generally borrows from a merchant, the greater part is spent on a feast for the people of both villages while a small sum may be handed over to the woman's former husband as a token refund of his marriage-expenses. Sometimes a pig or goat is accepted in place of cash payment and eaten on the spot; there can be little doubt that in the old times fines were always paid in this form and that the husband, as it still frequently happens, received no material compensation. The feast given in expiation of an offence is called *tapul banti* (offence feast). If the *panchayat* can come to no conclusion and the dispute continues, the parties appeal to the *kulam pedda* or tribal headman, whose authority is greater than that of the individual village-headmen.

Caste offences are today matters which call for disciplinary action on the part of the community; for the closer relations and more

personal contact with other populations has led to the adoption of the Hindu ideas of the different social status of the various castes. The Reddis rank fairly high in the caste-system, but many of the Telugu-speaking castes that have settled in the large mixed villages, such as Malas and Madigas, as well as the aboriginal tribes of Koyas and Kammars, are deemed of lower social status, and with members of these communities the Reddis may not interdine, intermarry or cohabit. The manner of prosecuting a man for sex-relations with a woman of lower caste was described to me as follows. If the headman of a village hears that a man has an intrigue with a Koya girl either married or unmarried, he summons the village-elders and also warns the offender of the impending *panchayat*, advising him to collect the money for the fine. On the day of the *panchayat* the guilty man is called before the assembled council, and if the girl belongs to the same village she too may be summoned. After hearing the evidence and consulting the assembled householders, the headman denounces the culprit for consorting with a Koya woman and proclaims him excommunicated; besides having to pay a fine, he is no longer allowed to enter the houses of Reddis, to eat with them or to take part in ceremonies or ritual; he can keep the Koya girl if he wants, but he must live with her in another part of the village.

I was told that even if the offender promises to give up his intrigue, the elders would not believe him; " if he has once made love to the girl, how can we say he will not do it again?" Only when the headman is convinced that the affair has really come to an end, will he agree to the reacceptance of the man into the community. On the occasion of re-admittance into the tribe the offender must feast the whole village; this will cost him about Rs. 12 and he must submit to having his tongue burnt with a piece of heated gold.

We thus see that quarrels over women, acts of violence, cases of theft, and breaches of caste rules, can all be dealt with by headman and village-elders, and with the exception of abduction, they are indeed seldom brought before any other council.

In disputes between members of different villages over the abduction of a woman, headmen and elders do not always come to a satisfactory decision, however, and in such a case, or if the aggrieved party has little confidence in receiving justice at the hands of the offender's village, appeal is made to a higher authority: the *kulam pedda*.[1]

The *kulam pedda* of the Reddis are equivalent to caste-headmen; their civil authority extends over a considerable number of villages, and the areas under the jurisdiction of the individual *kulam pedda* coincide today largely with the administrative units. Thus all Reddis within the borders of Hyderabad recognize the authority of Madi Zogreddi, who resides at Katkur, while all the villages on the left bank of the

1. Literally caste elder.

Godavari above the gorge stand under the jurisdiction of Karkal Bhimaya of Kottargommu. In the hills of Polavaram Taluq are several *kulam pedda,* each with a group of villages under his authority. But the institution does not occur, at least at the present time, in the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills, where, if it ever existed, it must have been superseded by the *muttadar* system.

The office of *kulam pedda* is hereditary, and passes from father to eldest son, or, failing sons, to the nearest relation in the male line. Today the *kulam pedda* are not headman or *pujari* in their residential villages, nor do they seem to belong to the same clan as the village-headman. Madi Zogreddi is *kulam pedda* for all Hyderabad Reddis from Parantapalli to Errametta and Anantavaram, but the *patel* of Katkur is a man of Kechel clan.

If a dispute is to be brought before the *kulam pedda,* it is customary for the headman of the village, in which the *panchayat* is to be held, *i.e.,* generally the village of the culprit, to invite the *kulam pedda* to preside over the proceedings and to arrange a day for the *panchayat.* The disputing parties do not repair to the residence of the *kulam pedda* to seek his verdict, nor is it very common, for the *kulam pedda* to take the initiative in the prosecution of an offence. Sometimes, however, the headman and elders of the complainant's village will ask the *kulam pedda* to accompany them to the offender's village, even if the headman of that village is not prepared to summon a *panchayat.*

The provision of food and if possible drink for *kulam pedda* and elders attending a *panchayat* falls to the lot of the headman of the village in which the *panchayat* is held, though later he will try and generally succeeds in recuperating his expenses from the offender. The proceedings of a *panchayat* presided over by a *kulam pedda* are as informal as those of an ordinary village-council, and the *kulam pedda*'s decision is usually a reflection of general current opinion. Yet once his verdict has been given, it is considered final, at least in so far as Reddi jurisdiction is concerned. The civil courts are open to all Reddis, but I have never heard of this course being taken in disputes between tribesmen.

A characteristic feature of Reddi justice seems the frequency with which the punishment of an offence is left in the hands of the offender's village-community and *kulam pedda.* When a man from Mautagudem, which, lying beyond the State boundary falls within the jurisdiction of another *kulam pedda,* took away the wife of a Gogulapudi man, the men of Mautagudem on their own initiative arranged a *panchayat* and called their *kulam pedda.* This *panchayat* fined the culprit and this fine was converted into a feast for the villagers of Mautagudem; if the aggrieved husband had cared to attend the *panchayat,* he could have claimed damages and might have been given part of the fine, but he was too ashamed to face the *panchayat* and ask for compensation.

Indeed few husbands think it worthwhile to undergo the embarrassment of discussing their wife's unfaithfulness at such a public meeting.

Karkal Bhimaya, the *kulam pedda* of the villages on the left Godavari bank, asserted that he fined any Reddi, who abducted another man's wife, Rs. 25 of which Rs. 5 or 6 went to the betrayed husband, whatever his marriage-expenses may have been, and the rest went towards the feasting of the *kulam, i.e.,* the tribesmen of the villages concerned. Much the same usage prevails among the Reddis of Hyderabad. When Boli Komaya of Gogulapudi (House 4), who was then happily married in Siddharam, went to visit relations in Chintalgudem in the Polavaram Hills, he met the young and pretty Kechel Chinamma whose husband had been ill for sometime. Chinamma and Komaya fell in love and Chinamma left her husband's house secretly and went with Komaya to Siddharam. When her elopement became known, several of her husband's kinsmen went to Siddharam and took away all the ornaments that Chinamma's first husband had given her, and at the same time they informed Madi Zogreddi of Katkur, the *kulam pedda* of the Hyderabad Reddis, of the situation. Then they returned to the Polavaram Hills, and neither they nor their own *kulam pedda* interested themselves further in the matter. Shortly afterwards Madi Zogreddi went to Siddharam and held a *panchayat* which fined Komaya Rs. 25. Komaya borrowed the money from a merchant of Katkur, and Zogreddi sent Rs. 5 to the aggrieved husband, and spent the remaining Rs. 20 on a feast; this was attended by Boli Komaya and both his wives, but since the aggrieved husband and his kinsmen lived in the area of another *kulam padda,* they were not even invited.

In former years *kulam pedda* used to keep all fines until they totalled about Rs. 100; then men and women from all the villages under his jurisdiction gathered and he feasted the whole company; but no such feast has been celebrated by the Hyderabad Reddis since the death of Madi Zogreddi's father, and nowadays a fine is 'eaten' as soon as it is realized.

In disputes between men of villages that stand under the jurisdiction of two different *kulam pedda,* both may take part in the *panchayat.* When Golla Lachmaya of Gogulapudi abducted the wife of a man of Mautagudem and the elders of that village accompanied by their *kulam pedda* came to Gogulapudi and demanded a fine, Madi Zogreddi's father, then *kulam pedda* of the Hyderabad Reddis, was called from Katkur to be present during the proceedings. On that occasion Lachmaya was fined a large goat, with which the *panchayat* was entertained, but no cash fine was imposed.

Most Reddis and those *kulam pedda* to whom I talked asserted that the intervention of the *kulam pedda* is generally confined to cases of abduction or quarrels concerning marriage, while all other disputes are settled by the village-headmen. It seems, however that some *kulam*

*pedda* in frequent contact with plains-people have developed the tendency to uphold certain standards of 'respectability' that were originally not enforced by tribal justice. Karkal Bhimaya told me that after the death of a married man, he would ask the widow whether she intended to remarry, and if she said "no" and subsequently went to live with another man, he would fine the couple. An occurrence in Gogulapudi illustrates the same tendency. Golla Lachmaya (House 1) had promised to give his daughter Gangamma to Gurgunta Viraya (House 5), and the boy stayed four years in Lachmaya's house and helped in the work on Lachmaya's field. Though they were not yet married, the young people lived as man and wife and when Gangamma became pregnant they went to Dornalpushe to stay with Viraya's father, but returned to Lachmaya's house before the child was born. Only after the next harvest did Viraya take his wife and child to his own father's house, together with the two bags of grain, which were his share of the crop which he and Lachmaya had raised. Even then no marriage-ceremony was performed and no feast was given to the relations. When Madi Zogreddi heard that Lachmaya had allowed Viraya and Gangamma to live together under his roof without insisting on their marriage, and that for a long time their intrigue had been common knowledge in the village, he came to Gogulapudi to fine Lachmaya, whom he held responsible. Lachmaya agreed to kill a goat and feed the villagers, the *kulam pedda* and such men as came with him from Katkur after the harvest, but I left Gogulapudi before this feast took place. Madi Zogreddi's intervention was in this case hardly in accordance with general Reddi custom, and it is more than probable that Lachmaya's possession of a considerable number of goats, as well as the comparative plenty of caryota palm wine in Gogulapudi made him a particularly attractive object for fining. In the case of a poor man Zogreddi would hardly have taken the trouble of interfering in the matter.

The institution of the *kulam pedda* in its present form resembles closely that of the caste-headmen of the lower Hindu castes and it seems doubtful to me whether it existed among the Reddis before they came into contact with Hindu ideas and began to live in large villages on the Godavari and on the fringe of the plains. In Karkal Bhimaya's family there is a tradition that one of his ancestors was installed in his dignity as *kulam pedda* by the Raja of Rekapalli and Madi Zogreddi tells that his great-grandfather settled in Katkur at the request of the Raja of Paloncha. He had lived at Kondapalli near Chintur, one day's journey north of the Godavari where he had gained prestige and influence by building a tank. The Raja encouraged him to come to Katkur, make the flat land along the river-bank arable and start rice-cultivation. Previous to that there had been no village on the river-bank and none of the Reddis on this side had practised plough-cultivation, but settlers

gradually collected from other places. Both Zogreddi's grandfather and father served the Raja as police-*patel* and it seems not improbable that at a time when the authority of the rulers over the adjacent open country was extended into the Reddi Hills, there arose the need for representatives of the various tribal groups, and that, with the example of Hindu caste-headmen in the vicinity, these appointed representatives also gained influence over tribal jurisdiction and were called upon as unbiassed arbitrators whenever a dispute could not be settled by a village *panchayat*. When, with the growth of the larger crowded villages and a more complex economy, quarrels and disturbances of the social equilibrium became more frequent, such an authority gained in usefulness and the influence of the office-bearers in importance.

In the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills there is no place for such an institution, for there the *muttadar* not only represent the inhabitants of their *mutta* in their dealings with the State, but play the same role as *kulam pedda* in the settlement of disputes. We will see, however, that the scope of the *muttadar* is wider than that of any *kulam pedda,* for they can appoint their own village headmen and are entitled to collect revenue from the householders of their estate.

Nowadays sanctions imposed by the village *panchayat* or *kulam pedda* consist almost entirely of fines, sometimes accompanied by excommunication. In former times more drastic measures were taken; and a relict of corporal punishment administered to evil-doers seem to have survived in the proceedings instituted against a man who frivolously defaults in the payment of a fine. In such a case several men go to the culprits house, seize him, throw him on the ground, cover him with a wattle-screen and tread and stamp him underfoot.

Characteristic of the Reddi's present attitude towards social offences is the absence of any belief in evil consequences which a violation of tribal law automatically draws upon the head of the offender. That the breaking of such taboos as the prohibition of sexual intercourse between clan-members might be followed by misfortunes other than those imposed by the *panchayat,* is a conception entirely alien to the Reddi. Ritual offences, on the other hand, such as the eating of crops before the performance of the respective first fruit ceremonies are thought to incur the wrath of the gods and bring about supernatural punishment (cf. p. 180).

It is only in an indirect way that the element of supernatural sanction is introduced into the dealings of the *panchayat*. A man who is accused of a crime but denies his guilt may take an oath to prove his innocence. Calling upon the earth as witness and touching it with the palm of his hand he may swear:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh Earth Mother, I did not do this; if I did it, may my head break and may I die. | *Bhumi talli, i pani nenu cheyi ledu; atla nenu chesi unte netti paligi savala.* |

The Reddis firmly believe that a man guilty of perjury will die on the next day, while if he speaks the truth his accusers will come to harm. Unless discredited by overwhelming evidence to the contrary, an oath therefore carries great weight in a dispute, and is neither lightly sworn, nor easily contested. No other deity but the Earth Mother is invoked as witness to an oath.

## *Clans*

While the ties that bind a Reddi to his village-community may be solved at will, and in the course of their lives, many men belong to several village communities in turn, a man's membership in the clan is permanent and his transference from one clan to another, even in case of adoption, an impossibility. Village community and clan are at present intersecting social units, but their functions are entirely distinct and no conflict of loyalties results from an individual's concurrent obligations to both these units. The village community is the framework for economic co-operation, for the organization of feasts and communal worship, and for the functioning of those institutions that serve in the maintenance of law and order. The main function of the clan on the other hand is the regulation of marriage and the strengthening of the social cohesion of the larger units, which cut across the system of social organization based on locality.

The clans of the Reddis are exogamous groups which are distributed over large areas and dispersed throughout many village communities; clan members are considered descendants of a common ancestor and are known by a common name. In accordance with Telugu custom, this name is nowadays described as a " house-name " (*inti peru*) and precedes a man's personal name: a man of Pogal clan whose personal name is Lachmaya is known as Pogal Lachmaya. Among themselves Reddis often refer to their clans as *gotram*, an expression also used by Hindus. Descent in the clan is strictly patrilineal, and the marriage ritual includes a particular ceremony, by which the bride is transferred from her own to her husband's clan (cf. p. 264). Although henceforth a married woman is known by her husband's clan name, the dormant membership in her father's clan governs the choice of a second husband.

The number of Reddi clans is so great that a complete enumeration cannot be attempted. We shall therefore confine ourselves to a discussion of the clans that occur among the Reddis who live within the boundaries of Hyderabad; many of these clans are to be found on the opposite bank of the river in the Godavari Region, the Rampa Country, and in the Northern Hills, where they are intermingled with other clans.

The clans occurring among the Hyderabad Reddis are as follows: Pogal, Kopal, Ventla, Vinel, Murle, Buzar, Kechel, Vala, Valla, Narpal, Gurgunta, Suntre, Pitla, Chintal, Sidi, Sonkal, Andel, Golla,

Madi, Boli, Kotla, Dipa, Kadala, Matla, Upocheti, Kanugulu, Tumur, Chedele.

At present no clan is restricted to any single village and the distribution of most clans is so wide that no localization of clans is likely to have existed in the near past. The Reddis frequently state that one particular clan was the first in a village, but this does not mean that the village is the original home of the clan though generally the members of the founder clan furnish the *pujari* and are responsible for the cult of local deities. The men of Pogal clan are closely linked with Kutturvada, the village nearest to the scene of the great festival, which is annually held on the Papi Hill and in former times was attended by hundreds of Reddis. At the time of my visit Kutturvada was only inhabited by two Pogal families, but it is said that one generation ago the village consisted of ten or twelve houses, and several Pogal families have recently moved to Parantapalli, to the newly founded village of Balamamidi, and across the boundary into Polavaram Taluq. In Parantapalli the office of *pujari* is also held by a Pogal man, and it thus seems that this clan occupies a prominent position in the tract of country comprising Kutturvada in the hills and Parantapalli on the river. The other clans in Parantapalli are Kopal, Vinel, Ventla, and Murle. The Kopal clan, which furnishes the *patel* of Parantapalli, claims to have been there for a long time, and is also strongly represented in Kakishnur, Kondepudi, Balamamidi and Telladibala, where many emigrants from Parantapalli have settled, and in villages as far downstream as Sivagiri and Teliburu. The Vinel people, on the other hand, admit that Parantapalli is not their original home and say that they came from Kondepudi, where the *patel* and *pujari* are of Vinel clan. The Murle people are comparatively recent immigrants, but they are found in considerable numbers in Kakishnur and in Tekpalli and are moreover distributed over Chodavaram Taluq as far north as Bodulur.

In Kakishnur, the village next to Parantapalli, we find a large assortment of clans. The Buzar clan is recognized as the oldest in the village, and the dignities of both *pujari* and *patel* are still held by its members. It is said that later settlers arrived in the following order, Murle, Kechel, Vinel, Kopal. All other clans, now living in Kakishnur, such as Vala, Valla, Ventla, Chintal, Narpal, Suntre, Gurgunta, Andel, and Sida, are even more recent arrivals, and credence is lent to this tradition by the fact that thirty years ago Kakishnur was a settlement of only a few houses.

The founders of Tekpalli are said to have been of the Murle clan, which still furnishes the *pujari* and *patel*. Other prominent clans in the village are Ventla and Vinel, and most of the clans of Kakishnur are represented by a few households.

In Koinda the first settlers were Ventla people and the priestship is still hereditary in that clan. Next came men of the Vinel clan, and

the present secular headman is Vinel Bhimreddi, whose numerous brothers live in a small settlement of their own called Talagundi. Other clans in Koinda are Kopal, Murle, Kechel, Andel, Suntre, Tumur, and Chedele; it is noteworthy that of these Chedele, Kechel, and Andel occur also on the British side of the river and in the hills as far north as Pullangi and Siramkota.

Kasaram contains only three Reddi families, which are of the Ventla, Sonkal and Kotla clans, but Katkur, the next village upstream, has a large Reddi population constituted of the Madi, Kechel, Vala, Golla, Gurgunta, Ventla, Kotla, Katal, and Matla clans. At first there were only people of Madi and Kechel clan in Katkur, and while the dignity of *kulam pedda* is hereditary in the Madi clan, both the village *patel* and the *pujari* are Kechel men.

In Borreddigudem, Chintalapadu and Siddharam, small villages a few miles inland from Katkur, the same clans are found, and here too the priestship and headmanship are in the hands of the Kechel clan. Vinel, Andel, Kadela and Valla are the clans in Errametta and Chintamreddipalli; it is interesting to find that a Valla man in the latter village immigrated from Muluru, a village in Bastar beyond Konta, a fact which seems to prove that the Reddis in those parts have, to a certain extent, the same clans as those of the Godavari valley.

The predominant clans in the hill villages of Gogulapudi and Dornalpushe are Golla and Gurgunta while Joramamulu is inhabited by Kechel men. In Pantapalli live Gurgunta people and in Kunkulgoyapaka three Mander men with their Gurgunta wives, while we find in Modela and in Palamamidizelugu Reddis of Kechel and Gurgunta clan.

A different set of clans, known by such names as Bule, Upocheti, and Kanugalu, are found in the plains settlements near Anantavaram, but the occurrence of a few households of Buzar and Kechel people indicates that this group of Reddis is not entirely divorced from the Reddis in the Godavari Region.

If we were to view the distribution of clans in the Godavari valley above the gorges without regard to other areas, we might be tempted to conclude that traces of a certain localization are discernible. Thus it would appear that the Pogal clan is concentrated round Parantapalli, the Buzar clan is Kakishnur, and the Murle clan in Tekpalli, while the centre of the Vinel and Ventla people lies in Koinda, and that of the Kechel clan round Katkur. But any such conclusions must lose their validity when it is discovered that these same clans are also to be found fifty miles further north in the hills between the Pamuleru and the Sileru River. Their original dispersal then must have taken place in the remote past, and it is no longer possible to locate a clan's ancestral land.

Indicative of a one-time localization of clans is perhaps the custom

that in some localities certain *puja* for hill-deities may be performed only by members of one particular clan, or if no member of that clan is available, only after due apologies to the gods. In the neighbourhood of Katkur, for instance, not the village-priests but members of the Boli clan function at the Karra Panduga (cf. p. 199), and when no Boli man can be present those performing the rite address the *konda devata* with the following prayer:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh mother, we are born from that mother's womb,[1] since Boli people are far away we give you offerings; may we and our cattle prosper, may we dance merrily; when we return we will offer you another fowl. | *Ma talli iduga memu a talli garbana putina valamu, kanka Bolivarlu duramuga undabati memu pettukuntamu; memu godu godam salaga undavalenu, memu kəkalu kukalu vesukuntu undavalemu, mem poye tapuru paru kori itsipetam.* |

Besides the clans that we find both in the Godavari Region and the Northern Hills, there are also a considerable number of clans that are peculiar to each area. There is however one clan, the Palal clan, which deserves special mention in this context. The Palal clan is found in all the Reddi *mutta* of Chodavaram and Ellavaram Taluqs, and by far the larger number of *muttadar* and village-headmen belong to this prominent and wide-spread clan. Though today most members of the Palal clan differ in appearance, customs, and style of life, but little from other Reddis, many factors seem to indicate that the Palal people are the descendants of a population which immigrated at a time when the other clans were already established in the Reddi country. This question will be discussed more fully and with greater advantage in connection with the system of feudal chiefs (cf. p. 174).

While the feudal system of the *mutta* has imparted a certain prominence to the Palal clan in the Chodavaram and Ellavaram Taluqs, there are no differences in the social status of the various clans in any other areas. "No *gotram* is greater than the other, none is older; they were all born at the same time," were the words in which a Reddi explained the equality of the clans.

Although it is generally supposed that all members of a clan are descended from a common ancestor with one single exception I discovered no tradition or tales regarding their origin which could be considered explanatory of the clan-names. An exception is the Gurgunta clan, which is said to be so called because the ancestors of the clan lived under a *gurgu* tree. Several other clan-names have a meaning in Telugu and occur also as house-names of certain Telugu castes, but there do not seem to be any stories connecting such clans with the objects whose names they bear. It is, of course, possible that some of the clan-names

1. The idea is that also the members of other clans are descended from Boli people, their mothers or grandmothers having been girls of Boli clan.

are relics of a language spoken by the Reddis before they adopted Telugu, and that they had originally a meaning which is no longer remembered. None of the clans shows any traces of totemism.

A few villages in the Northern Hills have names very similar to those of certain clans, such as Palagondi, which is largely inhabited by Palal people, and Bachluru and Konluru[1] which suggest connections with the Bachel and Konla clans. It is probable that these villagers are called after their founders, for there is no indication whatsoever that these small settlements are the ancestral home of the respective clans.

I have never heard of any rivalry between two clans, nor, with the exception of the Palal people, have any Reddis attempted to impress me with the superiority of their own over other clans. There is no pronounced feeling of solidarity between clan members and co-operation between those living in one settlement does not go beyond that usual among fellow-villagers; there is no agency, which could organize any concerted action on the part of the widely dispersed members of a clan. Generally a Reddi, unless he has immigrated recently, has no knowledge of the existence of his clan in areas beyond the immediate neighbourhood, and clan-unity never finds expression in such institutions as a council of clan-elders or a clan-headman.

The only occasion on which in some localities the members of a clan act as a body are the rites in honour of a deity that bears some of the features of a clan-god. The exact nature of such deities, whose cult is the obligation and privilege of one clan is however somewhat obscure, and it appears that only certain clans have a tutelar deity of their own. The clan-deity resides either in the house of one clan-member or in a place in the jungle at some distance from the village.

Reddis frequently refer to these deities as 'house-gods' in the same way as they describe their clan names as *inti perulu* 'house-names.' They admit, however, that all the clan-members in a village keep their 'house-god' in one house, or at one particular place in the jungle. In Teliberu, a village below the gorge, for instance, the *pujari* and headman has screened off a corner of his house and there on a small mud dais he places offerings for his "house-god;" the *pujari* is of Andel clan and only Andel people may enter that corner. This is evidently the common place of worship for all the clan-members of the village, for the other Andel people have no 'god-rooms' in their houses.

The main importance of the clans is at present their function as exogamous groups regulating marriage-relations. Unions within the clan are strictly forbidden, and endo-clan incest is punished by excommunication. The clan is, however, not the only exogamous unit; certain clans are said to be 'like brothers' and form therefore larger groupings, within which marriage is not permissible. Those clans

1. *Uru* is the Telugu word for village.

with which a person can intermarry are called *varse*, while brother-clans are described simply as *anna-tamudu* (elder brother-younger brother). A man addresses all men of his own generation that belong to a *varse* clan according to their age as *bawa* or *bamardi* (*i.e.*, brothers-in-law) and those belonging to a brother clan as *anna* or *tamudu*. Today no clear system is discernible in the formation of the group consisting of brother-clans, and to describe them as phratries would not be justifiable. For although two clans may be "brother-clans," their marriage relations to all the other clans are not identical. An example may demonstrate this: Kopal and Murle are "brother-clans" and do not intermarry; similarly Murle does not intermarry with Ventla, because these two clans too stand in the relation of "brothers." Logically one would expect Kopal and Ventla also to be "brother-clans," but this is not the case, and the two clans actually do intermarry.

An explanation for this puzzling phenomenon is difficult to find, unless we assume that the increasing dispersal of the clans has confused the Reddis themselves and that where two clans have not lived in neighbouring villages for a considerable time, they are doubtful as to their respective position in the exogamous system. Let us assume, for instance, that Kopal and Murle people have lived for a long period in one locality and regarded each other as "brother-clans," and that in another area the same situation existed in regard to Murle and Ventla; on the other hand Kopal and Ventla people may never have met so that, when the gathering together of large numbers of Reddis in the villages of the Godavari valley or immigration from one part of the country to another at last brought them in contact, they saw no objection to intermarrying, although both clans considered the Murle peoples as their "brothers." Similar developments may account for the considerable discrepancies in the regulation of clan-exogamy in the various areas; clans that intermarry in the Godavari Region are not allowed to do so in the Northern Hills, and vice-versa. If there ever existed a consistent grouping of clans into larger exogamous units, it has completely disintegrated; and we must resign ourselves to the impossibility of reconstructing past from present conditions.

Enough has been said about the nature of Reddi clans to show that they are in no way political units. If we disregard for the moment the stricter political organization imposed on the Reddis north of the Godavari by a foreign feudal system, the village community appears as the only functioning unit in the broadest sense of the word. But while the early contacts with outsiders seem to have favoured the crystalization of the village-organization and its institutional factors, the subsequent subjection of the Reddis to other systems of administration tended to weaken this organization and to restrict the scope of village self-government to a comparatively narrow sphere. With the

settlement of outsiders in Reddi villages, the development of a new economy, and the assumption of control by police and revenue authorities, the old social order has begun to disintegrate.

### *Tribal Feeling.*

We have seen in the foregoing pages that all Reddis observe more or less the same customs and regulate their social relations on similar lines, while some of their clans extend through the greater part of their territory. Clearly distinguished from all their neighbours and inhabiting a solid block of country, the Reddis form a unit that we may confidently describe as a tribe.

But does the Reddi tribe as a whole manifest itself as a functioning social unit? In certain respects it does, for the Reddis are evidently conscious of their tribal identity: all Konda Reddis affirm their social equality, intermarry and interdine, and insist on their distinction from other castes. Wherever two groups of Reddis have any knowledge of each other, even though actual intercourse may be rare, they realize that they are fundamentally the same and grant each other all the tribal privileges. Yet the individual Reddi, wherever he may live, has no idea of the size of the tribe or the territory inhabited by his tribesmen. His horizon is bounded by the limited number of villages with which he maintains social contact, and perhaps the nearest market. Reddis on the Godavari disclaim all knowledge of Reddis living in the hills to the north, and those north of Kutravada on the Pamuleru River were equally vague as to the Reddis in the Godavari valley. No organization co-ordinates the various groups, while the dissection of the tribe by several political and administrative boundaries has done much to encourage these parochial tendencies.

Whether in the past the Reddis ever possessed any indigenous organization comprising the whole of the tribe, which was later disrupted by the imposition of alien political systems, can neither be demonstrated nor disproved. But in view of the existing conditions such an eventuality appears improbable. All the evidence we can muster seems to point towards the same conclusion: that as long as the Reddis retained their independent status they were organized in autonomous village communities.

### *Feudal Chiefs*

A description of the Reddis' social organization would be incomplete without reference to the system of feudal chiefs or *muttadar* operating in the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills. True, this system has evidently been superimposed on the Reddis and has little organical connection with tribal institutions discussed on the preceding pages, but it is on the other hand a system which has been established for many generations and has exerted a considerable influence on Reddi life.

The origin of the *muttadar* system in the Reddi country is obscure, but when the area first came under British rule at the end of the eighteenth century the system was firmly established. In those days, the Rampa country was, at least nominally, ruled by a *mansabdar*, who styled himself raja and claimed the allegiance of the Reddi hill-chiefs or *muttadar*. Nothing is known of the functions of the *muttadar* of that time, but both their later revolt against an oppressive *mansabdar* and their prolonged resistance to regular forces during the Rampa Rebellion seem to suggest that they commanded considerable authority among the hill-men, whom they were capable of organizing effectively. Their position was certainly very different from that of those *muttadar* in other districts who are only hereditary collectors of revenue, and it seems likely that feudal chiefs had existed in the Reddi Hills of the Rampa Country long before they were known as *muttadar*, which is an Urdu term.

Nowadays the two taluqs of Chodavaram and Ellavaram contain 27 hill *mutta*, described as estates held on the service tenure of 'watch and ward' by *muttadar*, who in this area are mostly Reddis. The *muttadar* is pledged to pay a fixed annual *peshkash* or *kattabandi* and Local Fund Cess to Government, and is responsible for the maintenance of order within his *mutta*; he, in his turn, levies an annual tax, generally not more than Rs. 1-4-0, on every house of his *mutta*, and this is collected by the village-headmen or *munsif*, men appointed or confirmed in office by the *muttadar*. No revenue assessed on the land under cultivation is collected from either the *muttadar* or his subjects; nor have they to pay to Government any fees for the use of forest-produce. Serious cases of crime are investigated and prosecuted by the State authorities, but the *muttadar* settles all minor disputes among his subjects, to whom he stands in a patriarchal relationship.

Each *muttadar* holds a *sanad* from Government, which confirms him in the possession of his estate and circumscribes the conditions under which Government guarantees him and his heirs its undisturbed enjoyment.[1]

1. An ordinary *sanad* of this kind reads as follows:

"On behalf of His Excellency the Governor in Council, I hereby confirm you and your heirs in the rights and privileges of Muttadar of the Velagapalli Mutta in the Rampa Agency division, comprising the villages marginally noted and situated within the following boundaries:—

Village A.
Village B.

North:—Musurumilli.

South:—Potaram of Polavaram Zamindari.

East:—Musurumilli.

West:—Sitaram of Polavaram Zamindari.

The conditions of your tenure are as follows:—

First—That you pay annually to the Sircar the following kists in such instalments as may from time to time be determined by the Collector:—

Kattubandi, including *chirgurupamy* or Abkari Tax .. .. .. Rs. 21
Local Fund cess

Before we study the relations between the *muttadar* and the Reddis of their estates in general, it will be useful to demonstrate by some concrete examples the circumstances and position of the average *muttadar*.

The *muttadar* of Boduluru is in possession of a large *mutta*, consisting of the villages of Boduluru, Pullangi, Ekkavaldi, Kitsalavada, Potlavada, Nagetlavada, Vakkuluru, Satlavada, Tumuruvalsa, Sutlavada, Sipravadi and Suturu. There are 23 houses in Boduluru where the *muttadar* resides and nearly 100 in Pullangi, but most of the other villages are small, and there are not 200 houses in the whole *mutta*. The *muttadar* collects an annual tax of Rs. 1-2-0 from every householder, and hands over to Government a fixed *peshkash* of Rs. 71-2-0 per annum. After paying his clerk, a literate Christian Mala, Rs. 10, the net income from the *mutta* should thus amount to more than Rs. 100, a year, but I was told that the *muttadar* often grants remission of tax to poor people, accepting a cock as nominal payment.

Until two generations ago the inhabitants of the *mutta* were all Reddis, but since then a great number of Malas or Valmikis, low-caste traders from the plains, have begun to settle in the *mutta* and form today almost half the population. These Malas do not cultivate, but make a good living by trading and growing oranges and limes; the *muttadar* and the Reddis, however, subsist almost entirely by shifting cultivation, possessing neither ploughs nor permanent fields and little cattle other than goats. Some decades ago the *muttadar* planted an orange garden, but this lucrative enterprise has long since fallen into the hands of the Malas.

The present *muttadar*, Palal Lingareddi, said that his ancestors have always been in possession of the Boduluru *mutta*, but since the *muttadar* of Boduluru was one of the chief insurgents of the Rampa Rebellion and is reported to have fled at the end of the campaign, it is probable that in the subsequent settlement the *mutta* changed hands, though it may have been granted to another branch of the same family. Like most *muttadar*, he is of Palal clan, which is held to rank slightly higher than other Reddi clans, and he describes himself as a Lingayat. Nevertheless he eats with all other Reddis and joins in the

Second—That you conduct yourself loyally and peaceably, affording every assistance to the Sircar in maintaining peace and order by giving timely information of any disturbance or offence against the Law and apprehending and delivering to the authorities, robbers, rebels and other bad characters.

Third—In consequence of the assumption by the State of the management of the forests situated in your *mutta*, a sum of Rs. 200 will be granted each year to you under G.O. No. 433 dated 20th June 1894.

Fourth—Should you fail in any of these conditions, your *mutta* is liable to be resumed and you and your people dealt with in such a manner as may seem good to the Sircar; but if you faithfully observe them you and your heirs will live happily in the enjoyment of your *mutta* under the protection of the Sircar.

C. B. COTTERELL,
*Agency Commissioner.*

12th March, 1922.

communal feasts; at some rites he kills the sacrificial chickens, but when a pig is sacrificed to the earth-goddess, it is killed by the village *pujari*. The *muttadar*, however, receives an extra share of the meat when the carcass is divided up.

In appearance Palal Lingareddi differs considerably from the majority of Reddis in the Northern Hills, who create a particularly primitive impression by their coarse physical features and their scanty ragged clothes. The *muttadar* dresses, at least when receiving visitors, in dhoti, shirt and turban, while his build and features remind one of a Telugu cultivator of Kapu caste. His house is slightly larger than those of the other Reddis of Boduluru and contains two rooms instead of one. A number of brass vessels, unusual in other Reddi houses, indicates that an occasional cash expenditure of a few rupees lies well within his means, but the other furnishings do not suggest a standard of life much above that of his fellow villagers, and it is certainly lower than that of his richer Mala subjects.

If a member of the *muttadar's* family weds, a barber and a washerman are called to conduct the ceremony, though this is not a general custom among the other Reddis of that area, and at funerals or in cases of illness he sends for his *guru*[1] Pulikanta Sambaya, a man of Jangam caste, who is *muttadar* of Kutravada (cf. p. 178), a village five miles south of Boduluru.

The nearest market as well as the Government offices of the Taluq are at Chodavaram in the Rampa country to the south-east, and indeed the *muttadar's* whole outlook seems to be orientated in this direction, for though he knows fairly well the Valmur, Kutru, Kutravada and Maredumilli *muttadar*, all of whom live to the south, he says he does not entertain any social contact with his colleagues to the north and knows next to nothing of conditions in their *mutta*.

Some twelve miles north-east of Boduluru lies the village of Bodlanka, the residence of another *muttadar*. The intervening country, though fertile and transversed by the perennial Pamuleru River, is sparsely populated and covered with dense, high forest. There is little intercourse between the two villages, for though Bodlanka belongs to Chodavaram Taluq, the nearest market is Additigala in Ellavaram Taluq and the *muttadar* maintains eastward contacts.

The present *muttadar* is Palal Lachreddi, whose ancestors are reported always to have possessed the *mutta* and to have lived at Saula,[2] an abandoned village near Aukumamidikota. It was only the present *muttadar's* father who thirty years ago left Saula, and, after a short sojourn in Putagondi, founded the village of Bodlanka. The only other villages now owing allegiance to the Bodlanka *muttadar* are Sevarikota, a large settlement with a mixed Reddi-Mala population, Bana and

1. Religious guide.

2. Locally the Bodlanka *mutta* is still known as the Saula *mutta*.

Turravada, for Aukumamidikota, which by rights falls under his jurisdiction, was deserted six years ago when the inhabitants, on being pressed for overdue taxes, emigrated to Bodoluru and Kanivada.

The *muttadar* and indeed most of the people of Bodlanka village, though not of the other settlements in the *mutta*, have a distinctly non-Reddi appearance. They are of slim, tall build, with regular features resembling Malas and lowland Telugus rather than Reddis of the hills. Some of the Bodlanka houses are larger and the interiors considerably more roomy than the average Reddi house, but there is nothing remarkable about any of the ten houses of the settlement and nothing to differentiate the *muttadar's* dwelling from those of the other villagers.

Close to Bodlanka lie a number of rice fields, which the *muttadar* told me were made by his father, and which now he cultivates in addition to a flat dry field on which he ploughs and grows *sama* and *tsollu*. The other villagers have only *podu*-fields and no ploughs, but at certain seasons they work on the fields of the *muttadar*, who feeds them on the days he employs them, but pays no wages.

A stone's throw from the *muttadar's* house lie two circular mounds which mark the graves of his father and his brother each protected by a thatched shelter. The *muttadar* and his family regard themselves as Lingayats and therefore they bury their dead in a sitting posture, He told me that he had two *guru*, both of Jangam caste, who lived in Chemagadda and Geddagadda near Ramavaram in Ellavaram Taluq, and whom he summoned on the occasion of weddings and funerals occurring in his family.

Yet in spite of the Bodlanka *muttadar's* observance of certain customs proper to Lingayats, the distinction between him and his subjects is not manifested in everyday life; he has no prejudice against eating with Reddis of other clans and acts as *pujari* at the various festivals, slaughtering the sacrificial animals and invoking the appropriate gods.

His neighbour to the north, however, the *muttadar* of Gurtedu, prides himself in being of much higher caste than even the people of the Palal clan, and does not interdine either with his own subjects or the other *muttadar* in the vicinity. He says that he is a Raj Reddi and of Kshatriya caste, while the Konda Reddis and even the *muttadar* of Palal clan are Sudras, that his ancestors Viramreddi, Kanamreddi, and Pandreddi came many generations ago from Polavaram in Vizagapatam, long before there was a Government in this part of the country, and that before their coming no other *muttadar* was in possession of his present estate. His ancestors founded Gurtedu, and the present *muttadar* calls himself Gurtedu Virabreddi. He declares that he has no 'house-name' like ordinary Reddis and does not belong to any Reddi clan.

Gurtedu is now a large village of more than sixty houses, surround-

ed by permanent cultivation, but except for two households of Raj Reddis, relatives of the *muttadar,* all the inhabitants are Malas; the other Reddis live in small hamlets at some distance and in the nearby hills. When Virabreddi's father died there was some disagreement among his three sons as to the succession, and Virabreddi, who finally inherited the estate, left Gurtedu and moved to Patakota a village three miles to the north, where he cultivates a great number of permanent fields, previously owned by his father. His house in Patakota, substantially built of mud, the walls decorated with geometrical patterns in three colours, the door posts extensively carved, the interior divided into several rooms and the open veranda stretching only along the front of the house, resembles the dwelling of a well-to-do lowland family.

I was told that 'Raj' Reddis cannot intermarry or interdine with the other Reddis, but I found that the present *muttadar's* own mother was a Konda Reddi girl and that in order to overcome all difficulties of the union, a Brahmin had performed a special ceremony at the wedding, which enabled husband and wife to eat together.

Virabreddi, however, married a girl of his own caste from Bejjangivada beyond the Sileru, and during the marriage ceremony which took place in the bride's village a Brahmin from Jeypore officiated. The *muttadar* is a Lingayat and buries his dead in a sitting posture; on the occasion of a marriage or a funeral in his family he calls his own *guru,* a Brahmin from Pandrole in Gudem, which is two days' journey from Patakota.

At such feasts as Sankranti the *muttadar* goes to Gurtedu, where he still maintains his house and gives a feast for his relatives, but he takes no active part in the feasts of the Reddis of Patakota. At the Gangamma Devi Pandugu, for instance, he does not function at the sacrifical rites, and although he usually contributes a goat, which is killed by the village *pujari,* he does not join in the subsequent feasting, for he may not eat food cooked by Konda Reddis. At his own ceremonies he does not sacrifice animals, but only proffers vegetable produce to his gods.

It thus becomes evident that the *muttadar* of Gurtedu is determined to observe the customs of high caste Hindus, and it seems that the standard he maintains conforms to family tradition. True, there are other *muttadar* who sneer at his pretensions, but locally his claims to higher caste are generally recognized and his aloofness from the social and ritual affairs of ordinary Reddis places him outside and above tribal life and distinguishes his status *vis-à-vis* his subjects from that of other *muttadar,* who live within the fold of Reddi tribal custom. His contacts with the lowlands serve as a channel for the infiltration of new ideas and new economic methods into the hills.

Since the opening up of the country after the Rampa Rebellion this is in a lesser degree true of all *muttadar.* For it is mainly the

*muttadar,* who came and still come in touch with outsiders; in delivering their annual tax, they visit the centres of administration, and become acquainted with conditions in the lowlands; they are, as we have seen in Gurtedu and Bodlanka, the first to introduce such innovations as plough-cultivation on permanent fields.

Yet whatever a *muttadar's* personal status and economic position may be and however much or little he may differ from his subjects in customs and standard of living, his function appears as an alien element in the Reddis' social organization and is without parallel in the Godavari Region. For the *muttadar* is the only representative of all the inhabitants of his *mutta* before Government and is to a certain extent responsible for their actions, while no democratic village-headman or *kulam pedda* considers himself or is considered responsible for those under his jurisdiction. On the other hand the right to collect taxes as well as to grant remission of tax, and the fact that he cannot be deposed by a decision of his subjects, lends him very real authority, which enables him to organize the people of his *mutta* to concerted efforts whenever necessary. Concrete proof of this authority is the ease and speed with which a *muttadar* can levy any desired number of coolies. This efficiency of village-organization renders travelling in the Northern Hills much easier than in the Godavari Region.

Nevertheless, the average *muttadar* is no tyrant and interferes very little with his subjects' freedom of action, knowing only too well that oppression would provoke the hillmen to leave his territory and settle in a neighbouring *mutta,* a course that would deprive him of tax money. Occasionally he calls the people of his village to work on his fields, compensating them either by the provision of food or by payment in grain, but he makes few demands on the labour of men living in far-off settlements. The decision of all minor disputes is left to the normal village *panchayat,* and the *muttadar* intervenes as a rule only when he is called by the headman; in all cases of serious crime the *muttadar* is responsible for notifying the police authorities.

But although a *muttadar's* judicial functions are rather those of a chairman of the village council, to which he is called, than those of an autocrat, his power is of a different order from that of a *kulam pedda,* in so far as it can be delegated to others. The village-headman or *munsif* are directly responsible to the *muttadar,* and are appointed or confirmed by him in their dignity. They are thus representatives of the *muttadar* in their own village, and though their office is normally hereditary, they can, at least in theory, be dismissed and replaced by a man enjoying the *muttadar's* confidence; they collect all taxes and bring them annually to the residence of the *muttadar,* where they must also report any serious disturbances in their village. Most *munsif* belong, like the majority of *muttadar,* to the Palal clan and some claim actual relationship with their *muttadar.* This seems to suggest that their

forefathers were actually appointed by the *muttadar*, and as delegates of their feudal lord they still command a much greater respect among their fellow-villagers than the average Reddi headman in the Godavari Region.

In larger villlages it is generally noticeable that the *munsif* is more prosperous than the other Reddis. We have seen already that the house of the *munsif* of Kanivada is a substantial building with several rooms, (p. 61) and learnt in another context of his control over the distribution of land. We may add here that his is the only family in the village, which possesses rice fields and practises plough-cultivation.

The *munsif* of Patakota also owns level fields and ploughs, has a fairly large house, and expends considerable sums on complicated domestic ceremonies. He is related to the Gurtedu *muttadar* and, though he does not hold himself so aloof from the rest of the community, he disclaims membership of a Reddi clan and styles himself Patakota Viraya.

Again in Siramkota we find the *munsif* the most affluent of the villagers; he has quite a large herd of pack-bullocks and engages in trade, a rare venture among Reddis; his business seems to prosper, for he has a large house with carved doorposts and several rooms. Aping his feudal lord the Gurtedu *muttadar,* and his colleague the Patakota *munsif,* he calls himself Siramkota Ramreddi and pretends that he is not an ordinary Reddi, but that his 'house-name' is Siramkota; however, I was told by the Bodlanka *muttadar,* himself a Palal man, that Siramkota Ramreddi is actually of Palal clan, and this is quite probable, since most *munsif* are Palal men.

Pretentious behaviour on the part of a *munsif* is rather the exception than the rule, and in the more inaccessible villages, the *munsif* live in the same manner as other Reddis. Palal Lingareddi, the *munsif* of the twin-village Rakota-Mamidivada, for instance, lives in an isolated house that is in no way superior to other Reddi houses. He acts not only as *pujari* for his village, but also as magician, and appears in every respect a Reddi real and proper.

The most puzzling problem in the whole *muttadar* complex is undoubtedly the position and origin of the Palal clan, which furnishes so many of the *muttadar* and *munsif* in this area. Its members, though many of them live in exactly the same style as other Konda Reddis, deem themselves of higher status than Reddis of other clans; it is emphasized, however, that they are yet of the same caste and therefore intermarry and interdine. Since the Palal, like other clans, is exogamous, intermarriage is indeed a necessity, and I never found a shred of evidence to support the Bodlanka *muttadar's* statement that some Palal people do not eat with Reddis of other clans.

There is a general tradition that the Palal people immigrated into the Reddi country at a time when the other Reddis were already

settled in their present habitat, and some of the *muttadar* of the Rampa country say that with the Palal people came their *guru,* men of Jangam caste. How then if the Palal people are, according to their own showing, late-comers, were they able to secure their position as *muttadar* and *munsif?* Family histories and traditions which might throw a light on this important point are not forthcoming; the present *muttadar* know nothing of the time preceding the Rampa Rebellion and those north of Kutravada hardly remember having heard of such an event.

It seems perfectly clear that originally the system of feudal chiefs was alien to Reddi social organization. Conditions in the Godavari Region, the general level of material culture, the extreme independence of the individual in economic and social enterprises, are all factors which speak against the probability of a stricter organization based on feudal principles having at any time enfolded the whole tribe. The *muttadar* system must therefore result from extraneous influence which penetrated the more accessible Rampa Country, whence it extended into the Northern Hills, but never reached, or, if it reached, found no foothold among the Reddis of the Godavari Region above the gorges. I think we may assume that such an influence came from the south-east or east, and that in all probability the system was introduced by a body of immigrant people of somewhat higher material culture and a social organization far more developed than that of the original Reddi population.

It does not appear probable that the majority of those immigrants were cultivators, or indeed that they immigrated in search of new cultivable land. For such permanent cultivation as exists in the Northern Hills seems to be of fairly recent date, and I think it is more likely that the first group of outsiders who settled among the Reddis, becoming chiefs and village headmen, were of a militant class, rather than cultivators like the Kapus of the adjoining lowlands with long experience of the plough. If they were a militant body, they may have contented themselves with levying tribute in kind from their subjects and as later they became assimilated by the Reddis and were perhaps cut off from the lowland civilization, they may have adopted the Reddis' methods of cultivation.

In the case of the *muttadar* of Gurtedu, who immigrated evidently at a much later date and has never lost touch with the lowlands, the position seems to have been slightly different. For his ancestors probably immigrated with an eye on the agricultural potentialities of the country and not only recognized the suitability of the broad valleys of Gurtedu and Patakota for plough-cultivation, but brought with them people whom they put to work on the land, and thus built up a certain prosperity and were able to maintain a standard of life comparable to that of low-country landowners.

The advent of the Gurtedu *muttadar* must, however, have taken

place in fairly recent times, and cannot be regarded as indicative of the manner in which the earliest *muttadar* established themselves in the Reddi country.

We have already ventured the suggestion that the initiative for the extension over the hilly country of a feudal system may have rested with the Reddi Kingdom of Rajahmundry, which flourished in the 14th and 15th centuries, and, although this is purely conjectural, it may well be that at some time adventurous bands invaded the hills and with the backing of royal power, established themselves among the primitive and shy hillmen.

Should our hypothesis be correct—and I emphasize once more that we are moving in the realm of conjecture—it might even explain the name 'Reddi.' For the immigrants are likely to have come from the stock of the Plains Reddis, from whose ranks the Reddi Kings of Rajahmundry are reported to have sprung, and once this control over the little known hillmen was established, it is quite possible that outsiders began to refer to the aboriginals by the name of their chieftains and described them as Konda Reddis, "Reddis of the Hills." Perhaps these chieftains belonged originally to the same class as the family of Reddi Razus, who are reported to have owned certain *zamindari* villages on or near the Godavari below the gorges and to have sold them to lowland zamindars before the permanent settlement of 1820-1830.[1] A parallel development seems to have taken place in the extreme north-east. For here, in the Gudem Taluq of the Vizagapatam District and even in the hills round Patakota the hillmen, who identify themselves, interdine and intermarry with the Konda Reddis of the East Godavari District are called Konda Bagtalas, no doubt after their *muttadar*, who are of Bagata caste; the Bagatas are, according to the District Gazetteer, "a branch of the Kapus who chiefly reside in the Magdole and Golkonda hills and form the aristocracy there."

In the economic field a *muttadar* like Gurtedu Virabreddi exerts a profound influence on the Reddis in the immediate vicinity of his residence. Since the time that plough-cultivation was initiated in Patakota by the *muttadar's* father, other villagers have followed his example, cleared flat land of forest and created permanent fields, some even suitable for rice-cultivation. And, what is more, several Reddis have recently left their hamlets in the high hills, and settled close to Patakota, where at the time of my visit they had just started ploughing for the first time. Occasional work for the *muttadar* on his fields seems to have convinced them of the advantages of plough-cultivation.

Similarly Palal Lingareddi, the *munsif* of Kanivada, another village of the Gurtedu *mutta*, grows rice on a number of fields irrigated by

1. Cf. *Statistical Appendix together with a Supplement to the District Gazetteer* (1907) *for Godavari District*, by K. N. Krishnaswami Ayyar, Madras, 1935.

2. *Gazetteer of the Vizagapatam District*, Volume I, p. 79.

a stream. Rice cultivation is in the country round Kanivada still an unusual enterprise, but one which, on account of the many permanent streams, may ultimately be taken up by greater numbers of Reddis.

It must not be imagined that the impact of a more advanced culture on the aboriginals always results in a steady and unswerving progress, for reversions to older methods or habits occur at the slightest provocation. An example may illustrate this. Not far from Patakota we found a clearing in the jungle with numerous abandoned terraced fields; until a few years ago twenty Reddi families had tried to grow rice on these irrigable fields, but now only two households live on the nearby village-site; even these have now given up rice-cultivation and only use some of the fields for raising a small crop of maize. The failure of one year's rice-crop induced the remaining families to disperse into the hills and to revert to their old method of *podu*-cultivation.

The chain of contact between headmen and feudal chief, brings the *muttadar's* influence into even the remotest villages, thus opening a path by which not only new economic methods and new material goods but also new social customs and religious rites filter into the hills. For instance the custom of employing Jangams to minister at weddings, funerals and purification ceremonies, though evidently introduced by the Lingayat *muttadar*, is to an increasing extent being adopted by the other Reddis and is beginning to be regarded as a sign of respectability. The same applies to the sumptuous celebration of marriages and the growing influence of the parents in their arrangement. Among the Reddis in the remoter hill-villages marriages are still very simple affairs, and the young people are practically untrammelled in the choice of partners. A different standard is set by the *muttadar* and *munsif*. When Sadel Chinnaya, a man of Jedlakonda, recently married a sister of the Bodlanka *muttadar*, he gave an enormous feast to which he invited people from seven villages as well as a Jangam from Chemagadda and a barber from Ramavaram. The festivities lasted for three days and 720 seers of grain alone were cooked; on the first day the guests were fed with dal curry, on the second with chicken curry and on the third with mutton curry. Such a celebration raises a man's prestige, and the *munsif* of Siramkota prides himself on having spent Rs. 40 in entertaining the guests at his wedding. He insists, moreover, that marriages should be arranged by the parents and that a man abducting a girl without her parents' knowledge should have to pay an increased bride-price amounting to Rs. 16, a view which stands in blatant contrast to old Reddi usage.

Another example of the infiltration of alien ideas and customs is the celebration of the Gangamma Devi Pandugu, the feast of the water goddess which is observed throughout the Telugu country by all Hindu castes including Brahmins, and which in the Gurtedu and Bodlanka *mutta*, as well as round Chodavaram, has been combined with the

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ceremonial first eating of mangoes. A description of this feast, as celebrated in Bodlanka, is given in Chapter X, and there we shall see that it comprises such non-Reddi elements as the use of a sacred pot, a shrine for the goddess with a candelabrum, cock-fighting and similar amusements.

The employment of men of Jangam caste as *guru* is almost universal among the *muttadar* of the Palal clan, and they have the tradition that their ancestors brought Jangams with them, when they first settled in the Reddi Hills. There is, however, only one *muttadar* who is a Jangam himself, the *muttadar* of Kutravada, Pulikanta Sambaya. He relates that his grandfather was the *guru* of the *muttadar* during the Rampa Rebellion and since he encouraged them by his prophecies to continue their resistance to Government he was ultimately captured and imprisoned. His son, Sambaya's father, however, turned over to the Government, and in recognition of 'services rendered' during the later stages of the rebellion, was awarded the Kutravada *mutta*, whose Palal *muttadar* had fled.

Pulikanta Sambaya acts as *guru* for many Reddis, functioning at their weddings and funerals, but when there is a similar event in his family he calls a Brahmin. "What Brahmins are to us Jangams," he explained, "we are to the Reddis." He interdines with Reddis, and in Kutravada the annual feasts are celebrated by both Reddis and Jangams together, Sambaya himself kills the sacrificial chicken, goat or pig but being a Jangam he abstains from eating pork. Jangams and Reddis even "take wives from each other," as they express it; they do not say that they "marry" each other's girls, for the full rites of marriage cannot be performed at such intercaste unions. Sambaya himself has only recently taken a Reddi girl as his seventh wife.

In appearance and manners, and to judge from his large and well-furnished house and his style of living he is as distinct from a Hill Reddi as any plains man, and though other Jangams may have accompanied the Palal people when they first immigrated into the Reddi country, Sambaya's family seems to have come from the civilized lowlands much more recently. He is perhaps the latest comer among the *muttadar* and undoubtedly the most progressive. For years he has been a member of the District Board and thus forms the most direct link between the old feudal system and the new Administration.

CHAPTER X.

# RELIGION AND RITUAL.

TODAY Reddi religion bears the imprint of numerous alien influences and many beliefs and forms of ritual are directly traceable to neighbouring Hindu populations. Yet it would be wrong to assume that the Reddis themselves regard any of the individual rites which they are now in the habit of practising as anything but components of an all-comprising system designed to propitiate the supernatural powers on whose favour they depend. Old and new are closely interwoven, and similar emotional reactions accompany the worship of the various deities whatever the origin of their cult. In attempting a classification of the religious acts and the deities to whom they are directed, we must remember that this does not reflect a similar distinction in the mind of the Reddis. Their conception of the nature and the attributes of the various deities is vague; when questioned, they will say that they do not know what the gods are like, but that from their fathers' time they have worshipped them in order to get good crops and to be free from disease and other misfortunes. The scarcity of mythological beliefs concerning the origin, character or activities of deities is surprising, and I was long inclined to doubt the good faith of my informants when they protested their ignorance, but repeated inquiries in widely separated areas at last convinced me that the Reddis really lack detailed traditions as to the nature of gods or their role in the origin of the world and the human race.

## *Public Feasts and Ceremonies*

The differences observable in the economic and social systems of the various groups of Reddis are mirrored in the local variations of ritual and ceremony. Though confusing in detail, these variations rarely impair the fundamental nature of a rite, and this allows us to draw a general picture without referring continuously to modifications and additions peculiar to certain localities. We will take as standard the customs observed by the Reddis of the Godavari Region, particularly those of Hyderabad, and though even here we meet a slight diversity between the usages of individual villages, it is only when we come to the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills that the differences are great enough to warrant a separate description of certain ceremonies.

Most of the feasts and ceremonies of communal character recur annually and are performed at a particular season; they are the mile-

stones of the ritual cycle and both their importance and universal observance suggest that they should come first in our analysis.

The greatest of Reddi feasts is undoubtedly the Mamidi Panduga or mango first fruit eating, and it is the only public feast, which is associated with the gathering of jungle fruits. It may be celebrated any time between the formation of the first mangoes, when they are green and no bigger than a pigeon's egg, and their ripening two months later. The mangoes blossom and ripen much earlier in the hot Godavari Region than in the hills 3,000 feet above sea-level in the north, but in general early April can be considered the most usual time for the performance of the Mango Feast.

Before the celebration of this feast the eating of mangoes is strictly forbidden, and there is the wide-spread belief that a violation of this taboo would bring man-eating or cattle-lifting tigers to the village. In the Godavari Region, where the mangoes are eaten green as a vegetable, the first-fruit ceremony is sometimes held as early as February, but in the Northern Hills the Reddis do not celebrate the Mamidi Panduga until the first mangoes ripen, which in this area is sometime in May and consequently the fruit often begins to fall to the ground before the feast is held. It is here that some Reddis think that little harm can result from children breaking the taboo by eating windfalls in the jungle.

In Gogulapudi, where I watched the Mamidi Panduga in 1941, it was held unusually early. When I arrived in the village on February 13th the villagers talked of celebrating the feast in about a week's time, and it took place on February 17th. The moon was then in its third quarter, but I was assured that the state of the moon had no bearing on the date of the feast; indeed the men of the village did not decide on the time for ceremony until two or three days before.

On the sixth night after full-moon the people of the twin settlement Gogulapudi-Dornalpushe, which forms, as we have seen, one village-community, assembled in the open space in front of Golla Lachmaya's house and began to dance and beat their drums.

And as they danced they sang a chant in praise of Mutielamma, the Earth Mother and the hill-deities:

Lelo, lelo lelena,
Oh mother, Mutielamma, mother!
At your feet let us rejoice!
Lelo, lelo lelena,
Give us vessels of silver, mother!
With running water we wash your feet,
Lelo, lelo lelena,
Give us vessels of silver, mother!
With running water we wash your feet,
Our cloth we take off to dry your feet,

Lelo, lelo lelena!
To the sick give a bed, oh mother!
Oh mother!
Lelo, lelo lelena.[1]

When the moon rose over the trees and the leafless branches threw a hard pattern on the dance floor, there was a moment of silence; then all men broke into loud, inarticulate shouts and the drumming rose in a tremendous crescendo. As it died down, the men resumed the dance and started a new song:

Rise up and float, oh uncle moon,
Shine on the teak trunks, oh uncle moon,
High up float, oh uncle moon,
Shine on glistening pumpkins, oh uncle moon,
Rise up and float, oh uncle moon,
Shine on the crowns of *pala*-trees, oh uncle moon,
High up float, oh uncle moon.

Later the women joined the dance and singing and drumming, interrupted now and then by a round of palm-wine, lasted till long after midnight.

The next day two men went to a bazaar on the British side of the nearby boundary and brought some rice, dal, salt, chillies, and a small quantity of red *bottu*-powder[2]. The other villagers followed their usual occupations, which at this time of the year consisted mainly in the drawing of palm-wine and there was no taboo on work in the fields. Many hours of that night were again spent in dancing and singing.

On the day of the feast the village was deserted of men until the early afternoon; some had gone to their caryota trees to draw palm-wine for the evening's celebrations; others made a round of the neighbouring villages to invite relatives and friends. At about 3 p.m., the men and children began to wash themselves from large pots of water set down in the village-clearing, sluicing the water over their bodies with gourd ladles, rubbing each limb and carefully rinsing the hair: the women washed near the stream, perhaps on account of my presence in the village.

About 4 p.m. the silence of the hot afternoon was broken by a terrific clatter. Several men tried to catch one of their pigs. They set their dogs on a large fat boar and after an exciting chase, the boar was cornered and thrown struggling to the ground, where it was pinned by a pole across its neck while its feet were fettered. Boli

1. Exactly the same text is then repeated with "Earth Mother" substituted for "Mutielamma."

2. *Bottu* is the Telugu expression for the marks of coloured powder imprinted on an object with a finger. Both the caste-marks on the foreheads of the Hindu as well as the marks on ritual objects decorated for the purpose of a ceremony are described as *bottu*.

Kanaya (House 2)[1] and Patla Gangaya (House 5) then thrust the pole between the pig's legs and, hoisting it on to their shoulders, they went along the Jorumamulu path into the jungle. On the way we passed a group of girls dressed in brightly coloured saris with blue flowers in their hair, who were coming from Mautagudam to attend the Mamidi Panduga at Gogulapudi. After about a mile the men left the path to follow a dry water-course, and then they cut through pathless jungle till they arrived at an old tree at the foot of which lay a stone of irregular shape hardly as big as a child's head. This was the place where their ancestors were used to sacrifice to Mutielamma at the Mamidi Panduga and at other festivals.

The pig was laid on the ground; one of the men kindled fire from a glowing stick he had brought from the village and the others went to fetch water from a nearby stream. After sometime the *pujari* Golla Lachmaya (House 1, Fig. 6) arrived, accompanied by Gurgunta Kanaya (House 8). Lachmaya carried three small chickens in a basket and Kanaya brought two pots of cooked food, one of rice and one of dal. These were put over the fire on a hearth made of three stones, and all occupied themselves with preparing the sacrificial food, except the *pujari* Lachmaya, who cleaned the place in front of the sacred stone by pouring water over it. Then he lit some incense in a leaf-cup, and taking some red *bottu* powder from a small paper packet, decorated the stone sacred to Mutielamma with appropriate *bottu*-marks.

When the food was ready some of the cooked rice formed into balls and dal were put on big leaves and Lachmaya arranged them in two heaps, four balls to each leaf, in front of the stone; he set down four other leaves each containing small quantities of rice and dal and a few tiny, unripe mangoes. This done, he took two of the chickens, one in each hand, and squatting on his heels in front of the stone began reciting a long chant, in the manner peculiar to *veju*. Before each phrase he sucked in his breath as though under a great strain, and uttered a loud harsh groan; he then pronounced rapidly and in a low voice a string of sentences which ended in another long, drawn-out moan, almost as though he were in pain. This manner of invoking the gods seemed to put a great strain on the voice, and the muscles of the *pujari's* throat tightened visibly, standing out from the throat throughout the incantation. He told me afterwards that he was quite ignorant of what he had said, or in what terms he had addressed the gods, but his brother related the prayer to me as far as he could remember it, the general tenor being as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| We are celebrating the Mango Festival; | *Mamidi Panduga chestunamu;* |
| may all our children be safe, | *andaru pillalu salàga undavala,* |

1. Cf. p. 149 and the house-list in Appendix III.

| | |
|---|---|
| may they all be safe; may those journeying to other villages, those wandering through the forest be safe. | *andaru balalu salaga undavala; ur poyine adi poyine salaga undavala.* |
| We give you the new mangoes, up to now we have not touched them, | *Mamidi kotta niku istunamu, idi varaku memu mutuk ledu,* |
| but now we have offered them to you, we too will eat. | *niku itsi memu tintunamu.* |
| If evil spirits come, protect us. oh Mutielamma of Gogulapudi, we salute you. | *Gali vachina, duli vachina kachi kapadu Gogulapudi Mutielamma, niku dandam pettenamu.* |
| When strangers come, let them eat and then go in peace. | *Kapu vachina, karnam vachina, tini po vachu.* |
| Oh Mutielamma of Gogulapudi, | *Gogulapudi Mutielamma,* |
| may we be safe; | *salaga undi;* |
| oh god of the Teram Hill,[1] Kanam Razu, | *Teram Konda*[1] *Kanam Razu,* |
| oh Razu Marugu, Razu Korka, oh Mutielamma of our village, may we be safe. | *Razu Marugu Razu Korka, Grama Mutielamma, salaga undavala.* |

We notice in this prayer that the deities addressed, and above all Mutielamma, were assured that the people had not eaten any mangoes before offering the first fruits. The names at the end of the prayer are those of *konda devata,* deities dwelling on hills, but are only a few of the many actually uttered by the *pujari.*

At first the other men listened attentively and in silence to the recitation, but as it continued for some time, and included many repetitions, they grew restless, exchanged remarks between themselves and showed no particular reverence towards the rite. Even the *pujari* himself interrupted his chant several times and said a few words to the bystanders in his ordinary voice.

When he had ended his incantation he scattered some rice on the ground, and put the chickens to the test of grain-eating. It is believed that if the chicken pecks up the grain, it is a sign that that particular chicken is acceptable to the gods, but if it refuses, it must be substituted by another fowl, which is subjected to the same ordeal. On this occasion the first two chickens behaved as was expected and when they had each eaten of the rice Lachmaya handed them over to one of his assistants. Now the pig was lifted by the pole and brought close to the stone; the

1. Teram Konda is a hill near Gogulapudi.

*pujari* took one of the rice balls and holding it in his hand started another lengthy incantation, begging the deities to accept the pig. Then he tried to feed the pig by holding the ball of rice close to its mouth and though it did not swallow any of the rice, he was apparently satisfied with pressing some of the grains between its lips.

The scene was now set for the actual sacrifice. The *pujari* took the chickens and placing his bill-hook, edge upwards, on the ground and steadying it with his foot, he beheaded the chickens by drawing the necks downwards against the edge of the blade. Then he threw the fluttering bodies aside and laid the heads with a little dal on leaves in front of the stone. Next he turned to the pig. Its forelegs were loosened and two men lifted the pole high in the air so that, suspended by its hind-legs, it hung head downwards over the sacrificial offerings, and Patla Gangaya cut its throat with a knife. The blood that flowed was collected in a pot and the head was completely severed from the body; Lachmaya placed it in front of the stone and made several deep reverences, bowing with folded hands. He then poured some water on the pig's head and it was considered a lucky sign that the mouth opened when the cold water touched the head.

While these last rites were being enacted some of the men roasted the livers of the chickens and Lachmaya placed them with renewed reverences beside the other offerings. This completed the ceremony, and all the food offerings were packed up in leaves. Nothing remained in front of the sacred stones; the men returned to the village, carrying the pig on the pole, its head in the hand, and the chickens and the food-offerings in a basket.

When the *pujari* approached the village he killed the third chicken on the path without much formality, throwing both head and body into the jungle as an offering for Gali[1] and Duli, evil spirits who are believed to attack children and make them ill. In killing the chicken he said:

| | |
|---|---|
| If evil spirits come, | *Gali duli vastadi,* |
| may we be safe; | *salaga undavala,* |
| oh Mutielamma, we put our trust | *niva kapadukovala,* |
| in your protection. | *Mutielamma.* |

This chicken was left in the jungle, for no part of it may be eaten.

The sun was setting, and when the men arrived in the village it was almost dark. Their coming aroused little attention among the other villagers; at once the men set about disembowelling and cutting up the pig, while the women continued their cooking operations. Several visitors had arrived from other villages, but for the next few hours little occurred, and both guests and hosts sat gossiping inside the houses.

1. *Gali* are the ghosts of persons who died an evil death, and Gali Devudu is the wind-god. here, however, two spirits of non-human origin are propitiated.

It was only at about 10 p.m. that a few men brought out their drums and their first tentative beats gathered all the villagers on the dancing-place. At first the rhythm was measured. The drummers in a compact group led the men round and round the centre of the dance floor, while the women danced on the outskirts in small chains of two, three and four holding each others' hands, their bunches of rattles clasped between the palms. These rattles (Fig. K.) are clusters of dried and split sword-bean seeds, and their dull jingling enlivened the women's dance, and was an excellent foil to the loud beating of the men's drums.

FIG. L. Women's dance-rattle.

Thus men and women danced together in an *ensemble,* simultaneously encircling the dance floor in an anti-clockwise direction, yet entirely independent of each other. The movements of the two sexes were uncorrelated, and even at the height of the festivities they never partnered each other; indeed they employed different dance phrases as media of expression.

The favourite phrase used by the women was four long gliding steps, the right foot leading three obliquely forward and one obliquely back; and this produced a surging effect, with the ebb and flow accentuated by the swinging of arms and the downward shaking of dance rattles. Later in the evening this same phrase was interpreted with springs and hops, instead of gliding steps. It was sometimes substituted by two other phrases, one best described as an open running waltz without turns, and the other as a rocking movement executed with slightly bowed back and springs with legs wide apart: spring forward on to the right foot, spring back on to the left foot, spring forward on to the right foot, and with a scissor-like movement, pass the back foot forward and spring forward on to it.

The men's steps were less regular and their phrases less varied.

The drummers travelled sideways, but the other men trooped behind them, their shoulders square to the direction of movement, which in these initiatory stages and as long as they remained massed in the centre of the dance floor, was forwards. They used either a lilting walk, or a lilting phrase in which the right foot always led, the back foot only closing up to the right heel, in order to leave the right foot free to advance again. Yet in essence the dance followed the same scheme as the women's: *i.e.,* the repetition of a particular phrase, then the taking up of a second to the exclusion of the first and so on; but there was no arrangement of phrases into figures nor any pattern-formation of dancers.

Men with hour-glass drums beat the lower membrane with the palm of the right hand at each step, but those who carried cylindrical drums accompanied the forward steps with a beat of the left hand on the upper membrane as the back foot closed up, a trill of two beats and, with their drum-sticks on the lower membrane.

At 11 p.m., the dance still continued in the same way, except that the rhythm had quickened and some women danced alone and with much greater verve, almost overrunning the slowly moving men. It was mainly the visitors who danced at that stage, for the men of the village were busy with the preparation of the meal. Several piles of leaf-plates, three baskets and six winnowing fans filled with boiled millet and two large pots of pork curry were brought into the open, and two men proceeded to fish in the curry pots with long handled basket-bowled ladles for the small pieces of pork swimming about in the reddish liquid and heaped them on a winnowing fan.

Some people from Dornalpushe were apparently still expected, for now and then Boli Kanaya shouted in that direction. The great bamboo fire, which had illuminated the scene was dying down, and I wondered how the men serving out the food could see what they are doing.

At 11-30 p.m., eleven men and two women suddenly emerged from the dark of the surrounding jungle. They came from Dornalpushe and were already very drunk; evidently the Dornalpushe people had treated their guests royally to palm-wine. The drumming stopped and all the drums were piled together in the middle of the dancing-place. Golla Gangaya brought two pots of water from his house and put them down in the open, together with a small brass vessel. One after the other, the men poured water over their hands and some rinsed their mouths spitting out the water.

By midnight all the men and boys who had come from neighbouring villages, and they numbered well over twenty, were seated in a semi-circle. The men of Gogulapudi and Dornalpushe then placed a leaf plate before each visitor, heaping it with millet, and so hungry were the guests that many began eating the dry millet without waiting

till Golla Gangaya had served out the pork and curry sauce. The diners mixed the millet and sauce on their leaf-plates with the whole hand, not only with the fingers as is customary among other Indians.

A little way away the women also sat down and, while the men were still eating, were served in similar fashion.

At 12-20 a.m., when the guests had all finished their meal, they began to tune their drums and dance once more, but the hosts sat down to their own food; men and boys ate in the open, beside the dance-floor, and the women took their portions wrapped up in leaves, into their houses.

By 12-35 a.m., the hosts had also finished eating; soon they too joined the dance, and the rising moon found hardly a man, or child who was not dancing. Yet the dance was still measured, and the chant which the men intoned more consecutive than the inarticulate shouts uttered before. It was an invocation of Mutielamma and the mountain deities, consisting of an unending series of verses such as the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Mutielamma of Gogulapudi, | *Gogulapudi Mutielamma* |
| In your honour we dance; | *niku sambaram chestunamu;* |
| Mountain gods on the hills, oh come! | *Kondalunu konda devatulu ravala,* |
| Earth Mother in the earth, oh come! | *Bhumiluna Bhumi talli miru ravala,* |
| Chinami on Teram Hill, oh come! | *Teram Konda Chinami miru ravala,* |
| Tamarazu[1] on Guruparati Hill, oh come! | *Guruparati Konda Tamarazu*[1] *miru ravala,* |
| Razukutru on Razu Hill, oh come! | *Razu Konda Razukutru nivu ravala,* |
| Kanam Razu on Pig Hill, oh come! | *Pandi Konda Kanam Razu nivu ravala.* |
| Kanam Razu on Temple Hill, oh come! | *Koval Konda Kanam Razu nivu ravala.* |

With the exception of Mutielamma and the Earth Mother all the deities invoked to attend the feast are mountain gods, named after the hill of their residence. The Reddis explained that they learnt the song from their fathers, but were ignorant of the nature of the various gods. But though little more than an enumeration of deities, the hymn seemed to have an enormous emotional appeal for the Reddis and lent the dance the importance of a religious rite.

Gradually the rhythm quickened, the chant died away, the compact groups loosened and individual dancers broke away from the central block and, hopping, jumping and skipping, revolved on their own axis in circles and figures of eight. Hour after hour passed and the drums

1. Tamarazu is considered the eldest of the Pandava brothers.

kept up their incessant and unfaltering throbbing; both men and women shouted and yelled as the spirit moved them and the dance grew wilder and wilder. Short couplets, humorous and taunting, took now the place of longer chants. Beating an hour-glass drum a youth of Mautagudem sang:

The women of this village,
What sort of people are they?
Handsome are the women,
The women of this village.
Coloured like a chillie flower,
The women of this village;
Big moustaches on the face,
The women of this village;
Coloured like a purple flower,
The women of this village,
Their breasts are large and round.

Golla Gangaya (Fig. 67), tripping with rapid steps in spite of the heavy drum he was carrying, was not short to reply with a terse popular couplet.

Don't bend and look, boy,
At the curving breasts, boy,
Don't gaze enchanted, boy,
At the swaying breasts, boy.

Sometimes one or the other dancer dropped away to take a short rest in a house, but refreshed by half an hour's sleep and a draught of palm-wine they would once more join the tipsy, swaying crowd, who in the light of the moon worked themselves into that state of ecstatic abandonment which knows neither fatigue nor exhaustion.

Dawn found the dance in full swing, and it was not till 10 a.m. that the last tottering dancer put aside his drum and silence enveloped the village.

Thus ended the Mamidi Panduga in Gogulapudi, and during the course of the day the visitors left in groups for their own villages. Some ten days later the people of Mautagudem returned the invitation and men and women of Gogulapudi went to attend the Mamidi Panduga in the neighbouring village.

Throughout the Godavari Region the celebration of the Mamidi Panduga follows approximately the same lines as in Gogulapudi, but the actual scene of the sacrifice is as a rule much less remote from the village. In years when a small village cannot afford to sacrifice a pig, only chickens are offered at this feast. In some places, as for instance in Tellidibala, the clans perform separate rites each before its particular sacred stone, but only at a few yards distance. The actual sacrificing of the animals is, however, performed by the *pujari* of the village, who

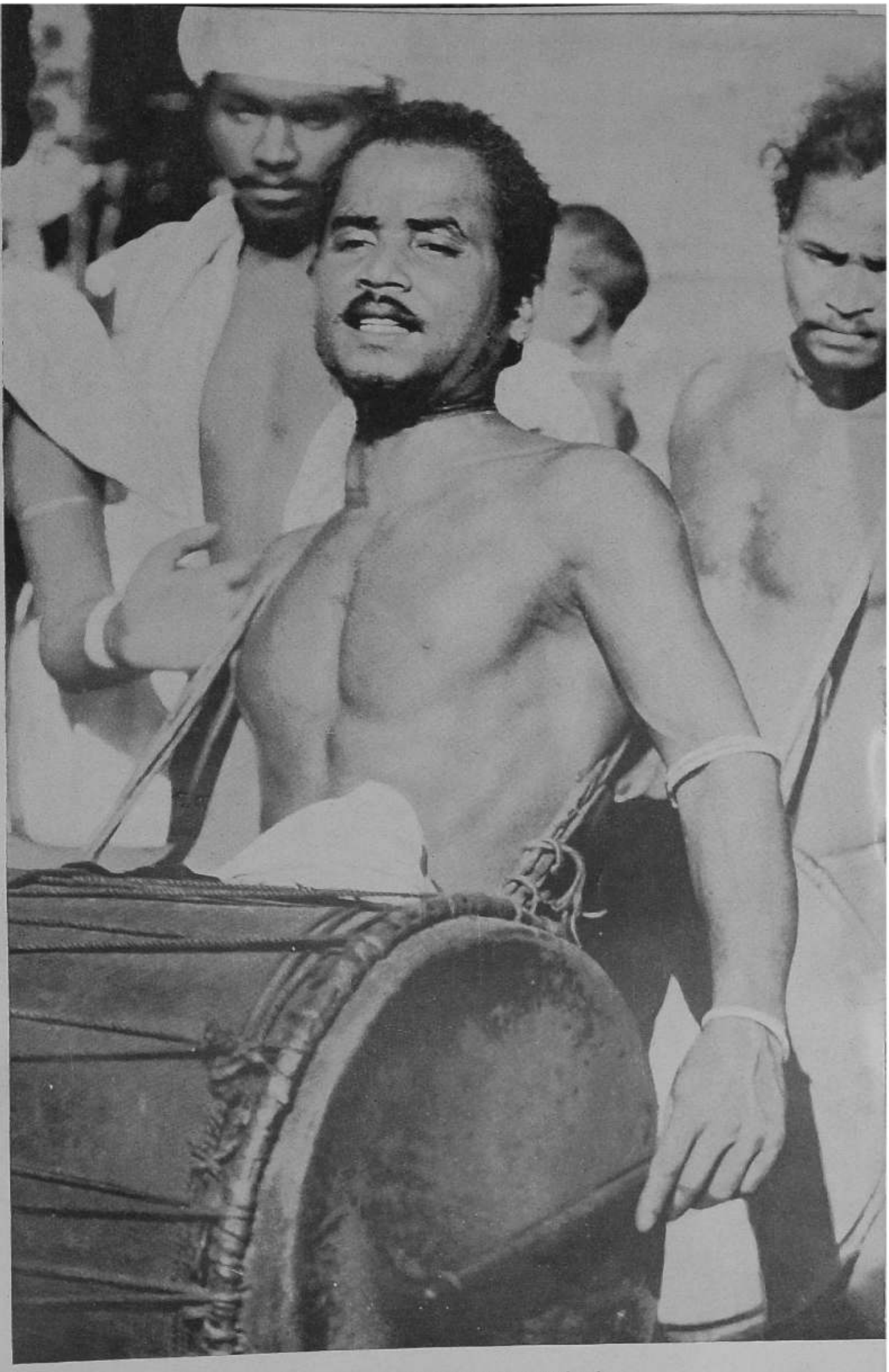


Fig. 67. Drummer in the excitement of a dance.

FIG. 68. Dance during the Mango Festival in Gogulapudi.

FIG. 69. Men and women dance independently during the Mango Festival.

acts for each clan in turn. He prays for a bountiful mango-crop and health and prosperity for the villagers. Though again all known gods are invoked in his incantation, the offerings are said to be specially destined for the *konda devata.*

Those Reddis whose clan deities reside in their houses perform in addition a private rite. In the corner sacred to the *inti devulu*[1] they offer some specially cooked food and sacrifice a chicken with the words: We offer you the chicken, which we have kept for you.

Among the Reddis in the Northern Hills the Mamidi Panduga has been amalgamated with the Gangamma Devi Panduga, a feast in honour of the river goddess, which, though unknown to the Reddis of the Godavari Region, is observed by most Hindu castes of the East Godavari District.* Originally this feast was intended to insure by the propitiation of Gangamma Devi plenty of rain during the coming season, and it is customary to carry a narrow-necked vessel marked with the representation of a snake in procession through the village. The Reddis in the Northern Hills are not aware of the significance of the feast; some told me that Gangamma Devi is identical with Bhumi Devata, the earth goddess, while others professed ignorance of her nature.

In the more accessible *muttadar* villages the ceremonies of this feast are fairly elaborate and indicative of strong Hindu influence, while in the remoter parts of the hills the Mamidi Panduga is celebrated in its older form, with only an additional sacrifice of a chicken for Gangamma Devi.

An example of the more complex rites is afforded by the celebrations in the village of Bodlanka, on the Pamuleru River. Here there is a small four-posted shelter with pyramidal thatched roof outside the village, which is Gangamma's shrine and the earthen pot sacred to the goddess is kept under the roof throughout the year. On a Sunday early in June the preparations for the feast begin and the *muttadar,* who is at the same time the *pujari* of the village, removes the old and sets up a new post, three feet high, on top of which he places a flat earthen dish with a floating wick in some castor oil. The next morning all villagers assemble at the shrine and the *pujari* lights the wick in the oil. He then draws a design in rice flour on the ground round the post, takes down the sacred pot, decorates it with *bottu*-marks and flower garlands and places it in front of the post. Next he cuts some mangoes into pieces arranges them together with a few bananas and small quantities of grain and incense beside the pot and then splits a coconut, sprinkling the milk over both post and offerings. Finally four chickens are handed to the *pujari* and after putting them through the rice eating test, he kills one after the other, with the following words:

1. *Inti devulu* means literally "house-god," but is applied to the clan-god even if he is believed to reside in the forest.

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh Gangamma goddess, may no illness come to our village; protect us, oh mother, Gangamma. | *Gangamma Devi, ma gramamla yemi zabu rakunta; kachi kapadavale talli, Gangamma.* |

On the evening of the same day, an unmarried girl, who is supposed to be a virgin and must have fasted the whole day, carries the sacred pot from house to house; everywhere the people make reverences with folded hands to the pot and give the girl some grain, which she takes back to the shrine. Once more on Tuesday morning she carries the sacred pot round the village and once more does not eat till midday. It is not until Wednesday that the *muttadar* cleans the pot, removing all signs of the *puja* and puts the pot back into its usual place under the roof of the Gangamma Devi shrine. He then takes all the grain collected by the girl to his house, where it is cooked and eaten by all members of his family.

On each night of the feast both men and women dance and sing and groups of young men, who are skilled in the stick-dance arrive from other villages and are entertained with food and grain by the *muttadar*. In the year of my visit the *muttadar* of Bodlanka had spent 120 seers of grain, apart from dal and spices, on feasting villagers and guests at the Gangamma Devi Panduga.

The stick dance (*kol ata*) is danced by Reddis only at this festival. They are not nearly so proficient as many tribes and castes of Orissa and the Central Provinces and though it is very popular among the Reddis of the Northern Hills, it is as yet unknown to the Reddis of the Godavari Region, and is very different in spirit from the free spontaneous dances of those Reddis we have watched at the Mamidi Panduga in Gogulapudi. The stick-dance is danced by men, particularly young men, who carry short bamboo batons, with which they mark the rhythm, but no drums. It is danced in circular figures, each dancer moving as an integral part of the dance-pattern, and though any number of dancers may take part, each man's steps and movements are exactly prescribed so as to concur with those of the other dancers. One of the most favourite figures is the chain-circle which is danced with either lilt or spring in the step and close-up phrase we have remarked in the men's dance at Gogulapudi. In Kanivada I saw other figures all based on circular formation of slightly varying character, one of which was accompanied by the following song:

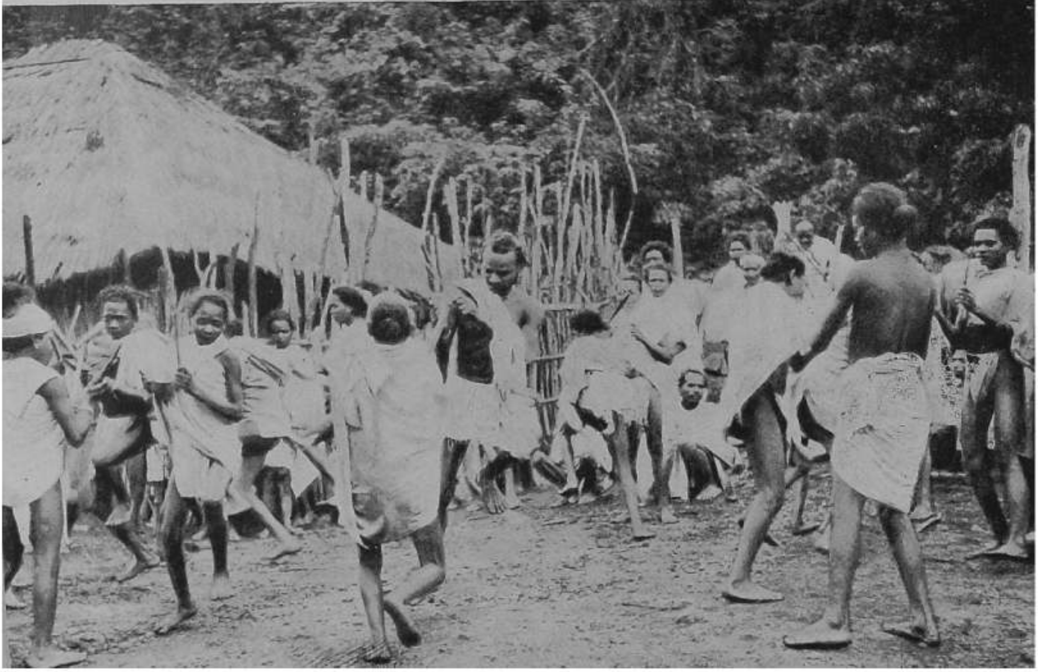
Oh! Karkal Lachmaya!
Come buffalo, come buffalo,
That we may track and shoot you.
Oh! Karkal Lachmaya!
Come pig, white-tusked pig,
That we may catch and truss you.
Oh! Karkal Lachmaya!

FIG. 70. Women's dance in Katkur.

FIG. 71. Dancers with drums in Kakishnur.

FIG. 72. Women's dance in the Northern Hills.

FIG. 73. Stick-dance in the Northern Hills.



Come sambar, black antlered sambar.
That we may track and shoot you.
Oh! Karkal Lachmaya!
Come wild sheep, two-horned sheep,
That we may track and shoot you.
Oh! Karkal Lachmaya!

In some of the Reddi villages of Chodavaram the Reddis observe a custom in conjunction with the Gangamma Devi Panduga reminiscent of the Choit Porbo or Spring Festival of the Bastar and Orissa tribes. On the morning after the last day of the feast all men are supposed to go hunting and the women drive slackers from the village by pelting them with a mixture of cowdung and ashes. If the men make a kill, there is again dancing and singing till the early hours of the morning. From that day until the next festival the women collect a toll from every stranger passing through the village, and the money thus collected is spent on the next great feast which is the Bhumi Devata Panduga.

We come now to those ceremonies—and they form the majority of all annual rites,—that are directly connected with the various phases in the Reddi's agricultural activities. No ceremonies accompany, as we have already seen in Chapter VI, the felling and firing of the jungle, and the first rite of the agricultural year is the ceremony which precedes sowing.

The Bhumi Devata Panduga, also called Bhu Devi Panduga, the festival for the Earth Mother, is performed by all groups of Reddis and the local variations concern mainly its date, the scene of the rites, and the sacrificial animals.

While some Reddis defer the celebration of the feast until the falling of the first rains, when the actual sowing can begin, most villages observe it when the moon is full for the last time before the monsoon is expected to break. By then all the *podu* have been fired and cleaned, and the ground is ready for sowing. On the day of the feast men, women and children assemble on a place outside the village, where the sacrifice is to be performed. In small hill-settlements this is usually the *podu*-field of the *pujari*, but larger villages in the Godavari valley, such as Kakishnur, have a special sacrifical ground under high trees, where the feast takes place year after year. Here the villagers cook millet and dal curry in large pots over several hearth-stones for their own meal, while the *pujari* prepares some special food to be used in the subsequent rite. After the usual preparations of the place for the sacrifice and the arrangement of food offerings on leaves, the *pujari* invokes Bhumi Devata and all the mountain gods, and finally addresses himself particularly to Bhumi Devata with the following words:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh mother, we give you an offering; may our crops grow and ripen, hail! | *Tallikana niku pettenam; pantal panda manchiga pandala, dandam!* |

Then the pig is killed and some of the blood is caught in a leaf cup and sprinkled over the seed grain of all the different crops. All householders have brought small quantities of seed grain, each variety in a separate leaf, so that they may be fertilized with the blood of the sacrificial pig and later mixed with the rest of their grain. The head of the pig is then severed from the body and the *pujari* places it for about half an hour on the 'altar' of the goddess. Meanwhile the pig is cut up and the meat cooked on the spot in several pots. Finally some of the pork curry together with a quantity of rice is offered to the goddess, and all the villagers present stand with folded hands and say:

| | |
|---|---|
| Guard us, oh mother; | *Kaya talli; pantalu panda* |
| may the crops grow and ripen, hail! | *manchiga pandala, dandam.* |

In some villages a *veju* or magician[1] takes an active part in the rite by assisting the *pujari;* and the *veju* of Kakishnur told me that after the pig has been sacrificed for Bhumi Devata he kills a chicken for Katamaya the god of the forest and the chase saying:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh father, may we find game, hail! | *Tandrikana, maku dorkala, dandam!* |

By sunset the ritual is over; leaf-plates are distributed and the men serve out the food. The portion that has been offered to the gods is eaten by the *pujari*, the *veju* and the old men at a small distance from the rest of the villagers. After this meal is over both men and women dance to the beat of drums and it is not until some hours later that they return to the village. Here dancing and singing continues, but no food must be eaten that night within the village.

The next morning all the men and boys go hunting; this ceremonial hunt is repeated for three, four or five days, irrespective of the luck which attends the hunters. If they kill an animal they carry it to a shady tree, and first offer three pieces of the uncooked liver and some times also head and hoofs to Katamaya. The *pujari* or a *veju*, whichever may be present, then says:

| | |
|---|---|
| When we go hunting, | *Epuduku shikar vellena* |
| may we come straight to the | *ma revuku chinnaga ravalchindi,* |
| river-bank, hail! | *dandam!* |

The idea is obviously that the hunters hope to drive the game straight to the river-bank from where there is small chance of escape.

Formulæ of this description are seldom standardized and may be enlarged, shortened or varied on the inspiration of the moment. A shorter prayer for the same occasion runs:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh Katamaya, give that we may | *Katamaya maku dorkavalchindi,* |
| find game, hail! | *dandam!* |

1. For the position of the *veju* cf. p. 231; there is not a *veju* in every village.

Part of the meat is then cooked and eaten, and the rest carried to the village where it is shared among all households.

Those Reddis who hold the Bhumi Devata Panduga early delay sowing until the first heavy rain, keeping the blood-soaked grain in their houses. In a few villages I was told that no further ceremony is performed and that the sacrifice at the Bhumi Deva Panduga and the soaking of the seed grain with blood on this occasion is considered sufficient to ensure the prosperity of the crops. It is more usual, however, for the actual sowing to be initiated by the *pujari* with the sacrifice of a chicken on his own *podu*-field; afterwards, but on the same day all the other householders kill chickens for Bhumi Devata on their respective fields, once more sprinkling all their different varieties of grain with blood before starting to sow the *sama*. In villages where the Bhumi Devata Panduga is not celebrated until after the breaking of the rains, however, it coincides with the first sowing, which in this case is begun on the day following the ceremonial hunt. In the villages of the Northern Hills and also in some hill settlements of Polavaram Taluq there is no dancing at the Bhumi Devata Panduga, but the ceremonial hunt after the feast appears to be a universal custom.

The overwhelming majority of Reddis do not perform any ceremony for the benefit of the crops between sowing and reaping. An exception to this rule is afforded by the Reddis, or Konda Bagtalas as they call themselves in that region, of Kumalvaru a hill village near Dharakonda in the Gudem Taluq of Vizagapatam District. They say that when the crop is about one foot high they sacrifice a pig for Sita, " who is the same as Bhumi Devata." The brevity of my visit in that group did not permit of further enquiries into the details of this rite, which seems to have a parallel in Siramkota (cf. p. 78) where a chicken is sacrificed to the Earth Mother while the crops are growing.

Reaping is, as we have seen in Chapter VI, a long drawn out process, and the Reddis have no ' harvest,' in the sense of a short time of intensive activity when all the crops are brought home. There are consequently no great feasts comparable to the Mamidi Panduga or the Bhumi Devata Panduga to mark either the beginning or the end of the harvest. But in the majority of villages prevails the custom that reaping must be initiated by the *pujari*. When the *sama* (*Panicum miliare*) begins to ripen he goes to his field, cuts a few ears of *sama* and sacrifices a chicken to Bhumi Devata and the *konda devata*, sprinkling the blood on the newly reaped ears. This practice is not universal and many Reddis protest that it is irrelevant who starts cutting the new *sama*. Absolutely essential is only the performance of the first-eating ceremony before any part of the new year's crop may be consumed, and this ceremony is generally held when the first of the small millets are reaped.

The Reddis of Gogulapudi celebrated the Sama Kotta, the " New *sama* eating," on the 21st August and in the morning of that day Golla

Lachmaya, the *pujari* and his brother Potaya went to the same place in the jungle where they had sacrificed a pig during the Mamidi Panduga (cf. p. 182) and put a small quantity of cooked dal and some incense in front of the stone sacred to Mutielamma, which they had decorated with turmeric and bottu. Then the *pujari* said the following prayer:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh god, oh Mutielamma, | *Sami, Mutielamma,* |
| we eat the new food; | *kotta buwatinenam;* |
| turmeric and scarlet powder | *paspu kunkam niku* |
| we offer to you, | *pettenam yestunam,* |
| incense we offer you, hail! | *dandam!* |

Then they went to Potaya's field, for on the *pujari's* field the *sama* was not yet ripe, and reaped one basket full of *sama* ears, which Potaya's wife dried during the day. Having threshed and husked the grain she cooked it in the evening in a new pot, that had never before been used.

The ceremony of the first-eating took place at about 8 p.m., in Potaya's house. None but the ordinary inmates of the house, namely Potaya and his wife and children and his brother-in-law Boli Kanaya with his family, were present. Potaya began by putting three *Bauhinia vahlii* leaves on the floor in front of one of the main posts, arranging them in a straight line. He then scooped small quantities of the cooked *sama* from the pot, and raised each handful to his forehead, thinking, as he told me later, of the Departed of his family, and placed it on one of the leaves. Squatting before these offerings he bowed with folded hands and murmured:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh god, Earth Mother, hail! | *Sami, Bhumi talli, dandam!* |

Then he poured out a little water in a line in front of the leaves.

All this was done without any formality and the other members of the household paid little attention to what happened. Potaya explained, that the *sama* on one of the leaves was for his father and that on the two others for his mother and deceased brother. He did not address the dead, however, and said that he did not know whether they came to eat of the offering (cf. p. 44).

When Potaya had finished Boli Kanaya repeated the same ceremony with three other leaves and *sama* which, although it had come from the same field that he was cultivating jointly with Potaya, his wife had cooked on her own hearth in a new pot of her own. After the ceremony was concluded each of the two families ate of its own *sama* including the portion that had been offered to the Departed.

Lachmaya, the *pujari,* was not present, but told me the same night, that his brother's offering sufficed for all the people of Gogulapudi and that from then on they could all eat their new grain. But the next day the members of the household of Gurgunta Chinnaya (House 5) of Dornalpushe performed a similar ceremony.

The men of Gogulapudi said that they would make a separate first-eating ceremony for the jawari-millet and in the villages where the Reddis practise plough-cultivation, separate first-eating ceremonies are performed for the crops raised on *podu* and permanent fields. These are described simply as Sama Kotta (New *sama*) Zonna Kotta (New jawari), etc., or as Kottalu Kulapatam (Mixing of new things).

Both in the hills and among the Reddis of the valleys it is strictly taboo to eat even the smallest part of the new grain before the appropriate ceremony. Though an infringement of this taboo is said to endanger the whole community, and to render man and cattle liable to attack by wild beasts, there appears to be no established custom concerning the punishment which should be meted out to an offender. I was assured, however, that a man known to have eaten of any particular crop before the prescribed time would not be allowed to enter the houses of other villagers until the taboo on this crop had been lifted by the performance of the ceremonial first eating. Even a visitor may not eat the new grain of his hosts, if in his own village the first-eating ceremony has not yet taken place.

An elaborate first-fruit rite for the *zonna* crop which I watched in Koinda will be fully described in Chapter XII (cf. p. 254), as it affords a concrete example of the inter-penetration of the customs of the Reddis and their neighbours. It may be regarded as typical of most of the public new eating ceremonies in plains villages, which as a rule consist of an invocation of the *konda devata,* Bhumi Devata and all other deities, known in the particular locality and of a sacrifice of chickens and the offering of a small quantity of the new grain, which must be cooked in new pots. The public rite is invariably followed by food-offerings to the Departed in the houses, and where no communal ceremony is performed, these offerings constitute, as in the hill-villages, the main part of the first-eating rites.

It may appear surprising that the harvesting of the last crop, when the Reddi has reaped the fruits of a year's toil, is not considered an occasion for feasting, and that the great festivals, when he gives himself up to merry-making, precede rather than terminate seasonal activities. This however, is not an isolated phenomenon; for we find among many primitive tribes, as for instance among the hill tribes of Assam[1] that the annual feasts function rather as stimulants before periods of exertion rather than as expressions of joy on the completion of the work.

There is, however, one feast which is held after the crop has been harvested, and this is the Chikurkai Panduga, the ceremonial first-eating of beans. Chronologically this feast would seem to stand at the

1. The two greatest annual feasts of the Konyak Nagas, for instance, are held before the beginning of the sowing, and before, not after the harvest. Cf. C. v. Fürer-Haimendorf. *The Naked Nagas*, London, 1939, pp. 94, 95, 223, 224.

beginning of the agricultural year, for it is generally celebrated at the end of January, either just before or just after the cutting of the new *podu*. But in effect, since it removes the taboo on the eating of the bean crop and is thus the last new eating ceremony, it seems to constitute the final act of the previous cycle. All through the Godavari Region the Chikurkai Panduga is celebrated with rites very similar to those of the Mamidi Panduga, and not, as one might expect with those proper to the various new-eating ceremonies of field crops. Like the Mango-Feast it offers an opportunity for the entertainment of relatives and friends who come from other villages to dance and sing.

In the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills, however, the Chikurkai Panduga has undergone a transformation similar to that of the Mamidi Panduga; for it is now combined with a Hindu feast, the great festival of Sankranti.[1] Since this Hindu festival is held at the time of the winter solstice, the first eating of beans occurs here one full month earlier than in the Godavari Region. Of the real significance of the Sankranti feast the Reddis have no conception, nor do they seem to imitate any of the Hindu rites in honour of the sun; what they have adopted are the name of the feast and some of the popular amusements, such as cock-fighting traditionally connected with its celebration. Many features of the Chikurkai Panduga have been retained: the sacrifice of chickens, but rarely of pigs, to the *konda devata* at a place outside the village, constitutes an integral part of the feast and the rites are followed by several days of dancing and entertaining of visitors. Peculiar to the Sankranti festival is a dance in which drums, a good deal larger than the ordinary *dhol,* are operated by two men. One man carries the drum on a cord round the neck, while another facing him and following his steps backwards and forwards beats the drum with two sticks. This method naturally excludes all more rapid movement, and the actual dancing is left to the women, who dance in open circles with interlinked arms, rather in the manner of Koya women. A special feature of the Sankranti feast in these villages is the cock-fighting, which is immensely popular both among Reddis and other castes; the Reddis, however, seldom tilt for money, but the owner of the victorious cock receives the defeated bird as a prize. Cock-fighting is not practised among the Hyderabad Reddis, and where it occurs it is evidently adopted from the neighbouring Hindu population. Another item of the Sankranti festivities is the performance of *veju* or magicians, who in the Northern Hills are called *goruvaru.* These men dance with flying hair, assume strange voices and are said to be possessed by spirits. They impress their public by such miraculous feats as walking on fire or total submersion in water for several minutes. The position of these magicians, who are distinct from the *pujari,* will be discussed in another context, and, though they are found among all Reddis, the public de-

1. Sankranti is the name of the day, on which the sun passes from one zodiacal sign to the other.

monstration of their power and skill at the Sankranti feast seems to be a practice originally foreign to Reddi culture.

However, even in the Rampa country the Chikurkai Panduga and Sankranti feast are not everywhere performed in conjunction. The Reddis of Boduluru, an important *muttadar* village, for instance, celebrate the Chikurkai Panduga apparently in much the same way as those of the Godavari Region, while the Sankranti is here a purely domestic affair. The members of each household cook some special food and having bathed in the river and donned clean cloths, offer food to the Departed on the path outside the village.

The Chikurkai Panduga closes the circle of those annual feasts which in one form or another are observed by all groups of Reddis. Besides these we find a number of ceremonies, which, while regularly observed in some localities, are either unknown or, if known by hearsay, not celebrated in other parts of the Reddi country. Most of these have no direct bearing on agriculture, and some are concerned with activities that are evidently recent additions to Reddi life.

A feast held in widely separted areas is the Konda Razulu Panduga, the "Feast of the Mountain King." In Kutravada on the Pamuleru River, the men sacrifice a goat and a chicken to Konda Razu once a year. The ceremony is performed in the depth of the jungle, and the meat, together with all other food prepared for the feast, must be consumed on the spot, and all remains thrown away; for none of the food may be brought to the village nor may any woman attend the feast or partake of the food prepared on that occasion. This feast is celebrated soon after harvest and is intended to propitiate Konda Razu and solicit his protection for men when out hunting in the jungle during the following dry season. It is observed in an identical form by the Reddis of Chodavaram village, and probably in many parts of the Rampa Country. The Reddis of Hyderabad assert, however, that they have no feast of this description, but in Tumileru, on the left bank of the Godavari, I was told of a Konda Razu Panduga, also called Pullulu Panduga, at which pigs and sheep are sacrificed for Konda Razu, and the blood, after being mixed with grain, scattered in the forest. Its alternative name means evidently "tiger feast" and the throwing away of the bloody grain in the jungle suggests a connection with the Vana Devudu Panduga on Papi Konda which will be discussed in a later context. Andel Lachmaya, a *veju* of Tumileru, told me that Konda Razu took possession of him at the time of the festival, and that he then fell into a trance and danced in a state of unconsciousness. A similar ceremony seems to be performed by the Reddis of Kondamodulu, though here it is called Konda Devata Panduga, and is usually held when the crops are growing. Here again the women are not allowed to be present or eat of the food prepared at the feast.

Another type of Pulli Panduga or Tiger Feast is held when a

man-eating tiger makes the country unsafe. Somewhere in the forest the men construct of bamboos the figure of a tiger; led by the *pujari* they dismember the dummy limb by limb and, sacrificing a goat, pray:

| | |
|---|---|
| Mother tiger, don't come near our fields; go away to other places. | *Talli pulli ma polam degra undadu, ekadakana veli povale.* |

Only men may be present, and all the food must be consumed in the forest.

We have seen in Chapter V how the caryota-palm provides the Reddis of many hill-areas with an intoxicating and at the same time nourishing drink throughout the dry season; a special rite is performed to secure an ample flow of the precious juice. At the beginning of the palm-wine season, the men of the village assemble near one of their caryota-trees and place three leaf-cups full of dal and jaggery[1] at the foot of the tree, where the *pujari* sacrifices a chicken. Then one of the men climbs the tree and draws a small quantity of palm-wine, which is sprinkled over the offerings by the *pujari* with the following invocation:

| | |
|---|---|
| Oh god, oh mother! | *Sami, talli,* |
| When we cut a shoot, | *maku gella kochena,* |
| may we get palm-wine, | *kallu kavala,* |
| when we cut a leaf's rib, | *matta kochena,* |
| may we get palm-wine; | *kallu kavala;* |
| like a great stream | *pedda vagu,* |
| may the palm-juice flow; | *jilegu parintlu kavala;* |
| to you we bow and offer fruits. | *miku moku pandlu itsinalu.* |

The Reddis of Gogulapudi told me that this prayer is addressed to Konda Sati, Bhumi Devata and Gana Mutielamma, but no deity is actually mentioned by name. The general address "*sami, talli*" reflects probably the true attitude of the Reddis, who often solicit the help of the higher powers without singling out any particular deity as the recipient of his offerings.

Mention has already been made of the growing importance of bamboo-felling for wages in Reddi economics, and this matter will be further developed in Chapter XIV. Though a certain amount of felling work is done at all times of the year, the main season for bamboo-cutting begins after the end of the rains, and this is inaugurated by the Karra Panduga, or Stick-Feast. All the men engaged in bamboo cutting assemble in the jungle and a goat or pig, which is usually provided by their employer, is sacrificed to the *konda devata* and Konda Razu either by the *pujari* of the village or a *veju*. In Tekpalli I was told that in the year of my visit they had called a *veju* from Posavaram, a village

1. Unrefined sugar.

on the opposite bank of the Godavari, to conduct the rite, in the course of which a pig was sacrificed. The object of this ceremony is to ward off dangers from the men working in the forest.

While it might be argued that the Reddis have at all times felled bamboos for domestic purposes, and that therefore the Karra Panduga is not necessarily a recent institution, there can be no doubt that the second ceremony connected with the bamboo trade is a rite of very recent origin and one that proves the adaptability of Reddi ceremonial to new conditions.

The Revu Panduga or Feast of the River Bank is observed when the first raft of bamboos is constructed after the Godavari floods have subsided, and no bamboos have been transported to the Rajamundry market for several months. A pig and several chickens are sacrificed on the river bank in honour of the *konda devata* and Konda Razu, and the meat shared by all the men who took part in the work. In those parts of the hills where the bamboos are transported on carts, the Reddis perform a similar ceremony at the time when the first cart is loaded and this, like the preceding rite, they call Karra Panduga.

The feasts and ceremonies hitherto reviewed have two features in common: they are performed at yearly intervals and are all associated with definite phases of the seasonal cycle and the Reddi's economic activities. The ripening of the mangoes, the sowing of the grain, or the felling of bamboos are all concrete events and the ceremonies connected with them constitute only a ritual underlining, intended to influence the course of nature to man's advantage. Though the gods are invoked to further this end, the rites are magical as well as religious; the sprinkling of the seed grain with the blood of a sacrificial animal, for instance, is undoubtedly believed to have a fertilizing effect, quite apart from the intervention of the Earth Mother.

The character of the rites which we have now to discuss is somewhat different. Propitiation of a deity whose latent malevolent disposition is believed to endanger the welfare of the community, is here the immediate object of a cult unconnected with any particular economic activity or outstanding event in Reddi life.

Among the Reddis of the Godavari Region it is mainly Mutielamma who receives regular worship throughout the year. A stone, tree, or post sacred to this deity is found at a small distance from most villages, and in some, as for instance Kakishnur, there are even two places devoted to the cult of Mutielamma. The stones are generally inconspicuous and the posts hardly recognizable as objects of particular reverence, unless they still bear the *bottu*-marks of a recent ceremony. The most elaborate of these cult-places that I saw in a Godavari village, was the Mutielamma tree of Kondepudi. About three and a half feet from the ground twelve dots, arranged in rows of four and almost touching each other were burnt into the bark, and above this design, the bark was

stripped off and four horizontal bands painted in red on the bare wood. In front of this tree the people of Kondepudi assemble every Saturday[1]; they tie a string of lime-leaves across the path from the Mutielamma tree to one on the opposite side of the path and burn incense and make reverences to the goddess, who, though generally believed to stay on rocks and trees in the jungle, is present during such ceremonies. Some times they even kill a chicken on this occasion. The *veju* of Kakishnur, on the other hand, told me that he performs the weekly worship of Mutielamma alone; every Saturday he goes first to a place near the Godavari where a stone represents the deity, and then to a post on the other side of the village; in both places he burns incense and says the following words:

| | |
|---|---|
| Guard us, oh mother! | *Kaye talli!* |
| Male goats and rams we offer | *merka potu gorre potu* |
| you, oh mother, the children of | *miku pettenam talli;* |
| this village, all those who come | *i uru pillalu jellalu, i uru* |
| to our village, guard them, oh | *vachinavaru poinavaru, kaye* |
| mother, hail ! | *talli, dandam!* |

The promise of male goats and rams is an allusion to a ceremony in honour of Mutielamma, which is performed once every three years, usually in the month of January. At this ceremony a goat and a sheep are bought by public subscription, and since as a rule Reddis do not keep sheep, they have to bring the animal from a considerable distance. On the day fixed for the ceremony all the villagers repair to Mutielamma's sanctuary, where they decorate the sacred stone, post, or tree with *bottu*-marks and prepare the ground round it by plastering it with cow-dung. Water is then poured over both sheep and goat and their foreheads are smeared with turmeric; ultimately a red dot, resembling a Hindu's caste-mark, is imprinted on the foreheads of the animals with *bottu*-powder and garlands of flowers are hung round their necks. The *pujari* or a *veju* then sacrifices both sheep and goat severing the heads entirely from the body. Before killing each animal he says:

| | |
|---|---|
| May we be safe, oh mother, | *Salaga undavala, amma,* |
| what I first promised, | *mundu nenu chepputini* |
| now we are giving you; | *ippudi niku pettenam,* |
| guard all the children, oh mother, | *padi biddalu kachina,* |
| hail mother! | *talli, dandam talli!* |

After the killing of the sacrificial animals the meat is divided, and all but the heads and legs are cut up and cooked together with great quantities of millet and dal. All the villagers then sit down to a meal served near the sacred place. With plenty of food and liquor a festive

1. The Reddis of the Godavari villages keep usually count of the days of the week, though not always of the months, which are reckoned according to the Hindu calendar, and are known by their Telugu names.

mood soon takes hold of the people; who, as custom demands, continue the feast throughout the night. Yet there is one great difference between this rite and feasts like the Mamidi or Bhu Devi Panduga: the Reddis do not play their own drums, but call Madigas to provide the music.

The next morning a raft of bamboo is made and covered with sand, on which a design is traced in rice-flour. The *pujari* and *veju* then place the two heads and eight legs of the sacrificial animals with their flower garlands and a pot of rice and dal and some *nim*-leaves[1] on the raft which is then launched and allowed to float down the Godavari.

In Parantapalli I was told that those Reddis who do not live near the Godavari carry the raft into the jungle and abandon it there, but I never discovered a concrete example of this ceremony in any hill-village.

A ceremony, which is rare in the Godavari Region, but apparently more frequent in the Northern Hills and the Rampa Country, is the ritual expulsion of a disease-deity from the village-land. Once on my way from Parantapalli to Kakishnur, I came across an array of dirty baskets containing the remains of food, withered lime branches and stones bedaubed with red *bottu*-powder. The people of Kakishnur explained that two Sundays ago their neighbours of Tekpalli had dumped these baskets and stones on the Tekpalli-Kakishnur boundary. When they found those baskets, they realized that the goddess Tatamma was abroad and hastened to send her on her way across their village land. The following Sunday they decorated their houses with fresh lime-branches, cooked some rice and putting it into the baskets left by the Tekpalli people took them together with the stones to the fringe of their village land on the Parantapalli border. Here they burnt some incense and marked the stones afresh with *bottu;* they did not, however, eat any of the rice. Then they prayed for the protection of Tatamma.

On this occasion I could not ascertain where and why this relay had started, and the only indication that she was a dangerous and not altogether welcome guest was the haste with which the Kakishnur people got rid of her at the first ceremonially permissible time. They did not describe her as a deity of disease, but called her simply "Mother," a title given to the small-pox and cholera goddesses all over the Telugu country. They told me, moreover, that this rite had been performed only twice within living memory: the previous Sunday and once some three years ago.

A fuller and more intelligible explanation of the same ceremony was proffered by the Reddis of Bodlanka in the Northern Hills. They said that if disease smites the village they would cook some food outside their houses, and carry it together with some coconuts and incense to the village-boundary, where they would heap the food on leaf-plates.

1. *Melia Azadirachta.*

Both the *pujari* as well as the man who carries the pot of food and the coconuts and incense must fast that day. The *pujari* burns a little incense in front of the leaf plates and recites a short incantation. Pot and food are then left on the boundary and the men return to the village to eat a special meal. This whole ceremony is performed in order to send away the small-pox goddess Ammavaru, also called Ammatalli. The people of the neighbouring village are never informed of the doubtful honour bestowed on them, but when they find the pot and the food, they understand whom they are harbouring on their land, and hurriedly arrange a similar ceremony to speed the goddess on her way. The Reddis of some villages in the north make a roughly constructed toy-cart which they leave with the pot and the food on the boundary, and in one place I was told that this expulsion of disease is a regular feature of the Gangamma Devi Panduga.

In a tribe subject to so many alien influences as the Reddis there are necessarily a great variety of rites and ceremonies, but though I am aware that the foregoing enumeration may not be complete, I think that with one important exception, all types of public ritual existing today among the Reddis are represented among these examples. This important exception is the Vana Devudu Festival performed annually on Papi Konda. The obscure character of this festival and the possible connection with human sacrifice advise its discussion in a separate section.

### *Human Sacrifice*

The suggestion that human sacrifice might have existed in an organized form in any part of Peninsular India during the twentieth century is certain to meet with incredulity, if not indignation. The occurrence of isolated cases, particularly in the form of building sacrifices is, of course, well known and has been discussed by J. H. Hutton in his Census Report for 1931.[1] These, however, can rightly be regarded as survivals of ancient rites that nowadays lack any institutional support. It is only in the unadministered hill tracts between Assam and Burma that, despite determined efforts at its suppression, human sacrifice lingers still as an institution, and it was there that a few years ago I met prospective but fortunately rescued victims, as well as boastful and entirely unrepentant perpetrators of this rite.

When I began work in the Godavari valley, I never expected to fined traces of human sacrifice in this area. I knew of course that the neighbouring parts of Orissa and the Vizagapatam District had once been the home of the notorious Meriah sacrifices, and that the Rev. J. Cain had collected a certain amount of evidence of the one time existence of human sacrifice among the Koyas. Yet all this seemed to belong to the past, and I was then actually unaware that a documented

1. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part I., pp. 402, 403, 408, 409, 411.

instance of human sacrifice performed, or at least attended, by Reddis had occurred during the Rampa rebellion as late as 1879. Great was my scepticism therefore, when I came across the first indications that human sacrifice may have had a place in Reddi culture in the not too distant past. Yet after a year in the Reddi country my scepticism wore thin, and though my material does not contain absolute proof of the former existence of human sacrifice among the Reddis, I believe that the accumulated evidence points very strongly in this direction. The problem is important both from an ethnological and psychological point of view, and I will therefore lay the whole material with all the arguments before the reader and allow him to draw his own conclusions. This implies naturally a lack of conciseness in presentation and necessitates a great deal of repetition but I think that the fullest possible documentation is in this case well warranted.

Many of the rumours of human sacrifice current among Reddis centre round a particular festival which used to be celebrated once a year on Papi Konda, also called Pandava Konda, a mountain not far from the small settlement of Kutturvada. The crown of this hill is covered with high grass thinly interspersed with gnarled teak-trees and approximately in the middle are five stones, one upright, standing some two and a half feet high (Fig. 74) and the other four lying on the ground, but in such a position as to suggest that once they had all stood in a row. The upright stone is believed to represent Vana Devudu (rain god), sometimes also described as Gali Devudu (wind god), while the flat stones are said to represent Bhimana, Arjuna, Nakula and Saha Deva.

Although these stones are known as the Panduvulu, the real identity of the five Pandava brothers as the heroes of the Mahabharata is unknown to the Reddis, who refer to them as Panduvulu Devata, and do not consider them as in any way different from other deities. There is, however, no complete agreement in the Reddi country as to the names of all the Panduvulu Devata; Bhimana, Arjuna and Vana Devudu are generally mentioned, but instead of Nakula and Saha Deva, which were the names given to the stones by Pogal Ramaya the *pujari* of Kutturvada, I have heard the goddesses Sarlamma and Guntamma included among the Panduvulu Devata.

The festival that interests us in this context, however, is invariably connected with Vana Devudu or Gali Devudu and consequently known as the Vana Devudu Panduga or Gali Devudu Panduga. E. Thurston gives, in his note on the Konda Reddis, a short reference to this festival: "The shrine of Sarlamma of Peddakonda, eight miles east of Rekapalle, is a place of pilgrimage, and so is Bison Hill (Papikonda) where an important Reddi festival is held every seven or eight years in honour of the Pandava brothers and a huge fat pig, fattened for the occasion is

killed and eaten."[1]

When I enquired in Parantapalli about the festival on Papi Konda, the local Reddis were extremely reluctant to speak of it, and most of them asserted that they had never attended this feast. Considering how close Parantapalli is to Papi Konda this denial appeared rather strange, but at the time I did not attach to it any particular significance. Later I realized that it must have been entirely untrue, for even Reddis in far-away villages related to me that in their youth they had participated in the Vana Devudu Panduga, and all alleged that even now the people of Parantapalli and Kutturvada celebrate the feast every year.

When I visited Kutturvada, Pogal Ramaya, a young man who a few years ago had succeeded his father as *pujari*, told me that in his grand-father's time, a great feast called Gali Devudu or Vana Devudu Panduga was annually celebrated on the Papi Konda during the mango-season. Many people assembled and one pig and twenty chickens were sacrificed, a whole bag of rice was used for the feast, and his own grand-father had acted as *pujari*. Ramaya stated emphatically, however, that for a long time this festival has not been held on Papi Konda, and that nowadays the people of Kutturvada performed a *puja* for Vana Devudu in their houses.

That a Vana Devudu Panduga or Rain God Festival celebrated during the dry weather was intended to secure rain for the coming cultivating season appeared evident, but Ramaya himself did not mention this aspect, and in the absence of further information it would have been unjustified to regard such a feast as actual rain-making magic. Subsequently, I was told by a *veju* of Kakishnur that Ramaya of Kutturvada "had a very strong god: Vana Devudu. If it does not rain, he kills a chicken and makes a *puja*, and then it will rain; in the same way he can stop the rain. But no other Reddi can do that, and we never go to Kutturvada to ask Ramaya to produce rain." Even in villages as far distant as Gogulapudi, the rain-making powers of the Pogal men of Kutturvada are known,, and it is always emphasized that no other *pujari* or *veju* understands how to propitiate Vana Devudu or induce him to send rain.

Unsatisfactory as Ramaya's information on the Vana Devudu Panduga was, it led me to discuss the situation with the Swami of Parantapalli, who has lived among the Reddis for more than twenty years. To him I owe the first fuller account of the feast, which he had watched a few years previously, when his hermitage was situated near Kutturvada. He corroborated Ramaya's statement that it was no longer held on the top of Papi Konda, but disproved the assertion that now only a domestic ceremony was performed in its stead. The open well-known site on the summit had been exchanged for a place near a spring, narrowed in by rocks and hidden in the depth of the jungle.

1. *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Madras 1909. Vol. III, p. 355.

The Swami's account runs as follows:

"It was at the end of the cold season when the feast was celebrated at the source of a brook, about one and a half miles from Kutturvada in the direction of Papi Konda. Since my hut stood close to this brook, the ceremony could not be concealed from me and I thus watched it from the beginning to the end. Reddis from several neighbouring villages had assembled, for the most part the important men of their communities, but two women had also come. They had brought chickens, grain, turmeric and great quantities of palm-wine. Soon after arriving, they began preparing food and grinding turmeric with which to smear their faces. Then the *pujari* of the various villages went to a secret place, unknown even to me, where two brass plates are kept. Judging from the time that passed till they returned, I would say that the distance cannot be further than two furlongs. They returned in solemn procession, walking in single file, with serious expressions on their faces, their hair wild and their bodies almost naked. Two men carried the plates and two old bamboo batons very reverently in their hands.

Beside a rock a circular place had been cleared of grass and there the two brass plates were put down. Then the chickens were brought to the *pujari,* who cut their throats and let the blood flow into the plates. They then sat down in front of the plates and began to read the omens, which were to be seen in the blood and to discuss what they portended. These omens concerned the welfare of the whole community, and the prospects of the crops for the year.

Then all the *pujari* and old men got up and embraced each other with great solemnity and apparent emotion, two by two clasping each other for a few moments chest to chest. Then they sat down quietly for a while, as if exhausted, and finally went down to the spring to drink some water.

In the meantime the food was being prepared: the fire for the cooking had been produced by rubbing two bamboos. When the food was ready, leaves were spread on the ground. Now the *pujari* beat the plates like gongs and then took them back to their hiding place. By the time they returned all the others had begun eating and they now joined them in their meal. So much palm-wine was drunk that at the end most were entirely intoxicated."

Armed with this information I approached Pogal Ramaya once more, and now he admitted, though reluctantly that a rite for Vana Devudu, for which he gave me the alternative name Meriem Panduga, was actually performed in the jungle at a place called Tom. He confirmed the existence and use of the two brass plates, and even told me, that these were kept in a nearby cave. At the feast the blood of chickens and pigs was dropped on these plates, and one could then see in the blood as in a mirror the semblance of tigers, snakes, scorpions,

and clouds, all omens of future events. All my attempts to see the cave and the sacred plates were of no avail. At one time I thought I had persuaded Ramaya to lead me to the place but after hours of wandering in the jungle we arrived at a stone sacred to a minor god, and it was clear, that Ramaya never intended to take me to the scene of the festival.

The great reticence of the Reddis on the subject of this particular feast continued to puzzle me, for otherwise they were much more willing to talk about rites and ceremonies than about social and economic matters. What was there to hide about this feast?

While I stayed in Kakishnur I heard vague rumours, about *patudu donga*[1] or kidnappers, who were supposed to capture men and kill them in the jungle. Just two months before my arrival there had been a scare in Kakishnur, but there were no casualities and no one had seen any of these mysterious *patudu donga.* The first serious intimation that perhaps more lay behind these nondescript rumours than met the eye were certain details of two cases of homicide which had occurred in Kakishnur in recent years. Both cases will shortly be discussed in full, but this much may be said in anticipation, that the blood of the victims had apparently been employed for ritual purposes.

As to the ritual use of human blood little could be elicited from the rather suspicious Reddis of Kakishnur, but in Tumileru, the village on the opposite bank of the Godavari, I found an opportunity of broaching the subject. Here I was told that during the Konda Razu Panduga the blood of a pig is mixed with grain and thrown into the forest; I asked casually whether in the old times human blood may sometimes have been used in the same way. The answer was instantaneous: "Of course, in the old times human beings were sometimes sacrificed, but now, with policemen and forest-guards going backwards and forwards, how could we do such a thing?"

The men to whom I was speaking added that in the interior of the hills, the custom might still survive and that in their fathers' time such sacrifices had been offered to the gods of Kutturvada; even now there persisted a fear of *patudu donga* at the time when the crops were ripening and in Tumileru there were still people alive who had once been attacked by such kidnappers but had beaten them back with their bows and arrows.

Here perhaps was the key to the Reddi's strange reaction to all questions about the festival on Papi Konda. Yet direct inquiries in Kakishnur might have wrecked my whole work there, and so I curbed my curiosity and awaited a better opportunity. This came in Errametta, a small village on the very edge of the Reddi country, where I found an old man, Andel Venkatreddi, who had attended the Vana

1. Literally "catching thieves."

Devudu Panduga and was quite prepared to tell me about his experience.

"When I was young," said Venkatreddi, "we all went to Papi Konda; even Reddis from far off villages came and there were often one or two thousand[1] people present, but no women, only men and half-grown boys. The Pogal people were the *pujari* of the feast; Pogal Saraya, the father of Ramaya, was the main *pujari,* and Pogal Chinamreddi, the father of Venkaya of Parantapalli, and another Pogal man used to help him. Some weeks before the feasts the Pogal men went through the country and collected five or six rupees towards the expenses of the feast from every village. They provided all the food; we did not take any with us nor did we bring any animals for sacrifice.

When we arrived on Papi Konda on the day of the feast, we stayed on the top near the five stones, and the Pogal men warned us not to wander about in the forest, for a *konda devata* was abroad in the shape of a tiger, and might devour those who strayed from the crowd. So we all stayed together. They said that only they were safe, for they were possessed by gods, and they told us too that the *konda devata* had changed herself into a tiger so that she could drink the blood that runs from the sacrificial place.

While we all waited on the top of the mountain and drank palm-wine, the Pogal men went to a cave down in the jungle where they keep two brass plates. It was in this cave that they killed the victims for the sacrifice and prepared some rice, but we never saw what animals were killed. After a long time the three Pogal men came back carrying the two brass-plates, one filled with blood and the other with a mixture of rice and blood. We did not know, what kind of blood it was; but the rice was later scattered in the forest."

Here I ventured to interrupt him with the question, whether he thought it likely that it was human blood.

"It may have been the blood of a man," he said without the slightest sign of surprise, "but who can tell? We never saw the victims killed, and the Pogal men did not allow anybody to come near their cave. When they had brought the plates to the five stones, they read the future in the blood. There was plenty to eat and so much palm-wine that we got quite drunk, and we danced with drums till the next morning. Then we went home."

Such was Venkatreddi's story; but was he quite frank, when he said that he was ignorant as to the nature of the sacrificial blood? He could hardly be expected to admit that he had been conscious of the sacrifice of human victims, even though perhaps thirty years had passed since he had last attended the festival. But that he was neither shocked nor surprised at my suggestion is in itself significant. If my suggestion

1. Allowance must be made for the Reddis' vague idea about numbers; it is doubtful whether Venkatreddi was able to guess the size of a crowd.

was to the point, he may have thought me better informed than I was, and therefore answered in a non-committal way. He added then that nowadays the festival is no longer held near the five stones, but in the forest at some distance. Questioned as to the rumours of *patudu donga*, he confirmed the fear of kidnappers in search of human victims, but said that he had never heard of anybody who had actually fallen into their hands.

The belief in *patudu donga* prevails not only in the Godavari Region, but exists also in the Rampa Country. During my tour through that area in June 1941 the Rev. Paul Son, a missionary stationed at Chodavaram, mentioned to me in conversation that two months before all the Reddis and Koyas of Chodavaram village had been scared of kidnappers, and this in spite of its proximity to a police station and the Tahsil headquarters. Subsequently I discussed these rumours with the *munsif* of the village, Sankuru Bapana, who evinced much less reluctance to speak about them than the Reddis of Hyderabad. He told me of the belief that on a mountain near Taddepalle, a big village about 12 miles north of Chodavaram, with a Reddi *muttadar* of Kutru clan, human victims were still offered to Maveli Devata. No animals were acceptable to this goddess, and if she did not receive a human victim once in three years, she would come to the village, and inflict all the inhabitants with disease. Another centre of her cult lies, according to this *munsif,* near the village of Dabbavalasa in the Vermulu Konda *mutta,* where the victims were killed in the jungle. He thought that the people must be able to provide victims even nowadays, for otherwise Maveli Devata would kill at least three or four persons in each village, and when I asked whether the *patudu donga* were Reddis or Koyas, he stated unhesitatingly, although a Reddi himself, that they were Reddis.

The *munsif* and some old men of the Reddi settlement of Rampa confirmed this information in every point and added several new details. They told me spontaneously that the goddess propitiated with human sacrifices was called Madiviti Maveli, and her sanctuary lay one mile north of Taddepalle. The feast in honour of Madiviti Maveli was celebrated in April, and since she accepted none but human victims, all the neighbouring villages were filled with fear at that time. That year the rumours of *patudu donga* had been so numerous and persistent even in Rampa, that one dark night they had caught and beaten one of their own fellow-villagers who was unlucky enough to be mistaken for a *patudu donga.* They told me too that the head of a victim sacrificed for Madiviti Maveli had to be severed from the body by a single stroke; then a cloth was soaked with the blood, so that in years to come, when it was impossible to provide a new victim, the cloth with the human blood could be placed before the goddess.[1] Finally my

1. Cf. the alleged soaking of a cloth with blood after the murder of Buzar Zogreddi at Kakishnur.

informants mentioned a rumour according to which people from Jari[1] a village in Malkanagiri Taluq, came across the Sileru River in search of human victims in years when they had had a particularly good harvest. In consequence no Reddi would dare to travel alone through the hills between the Pamuleru and Sileru Rivers.

The strong belief in Maveli Devata as a deity demanding human victims that is prevalent in the Rampa Country throws a new light on a tradition, of which I heard at Kasaram, a village in Hyderabad, between Koinda and Katkur. Near this village is a piece of flat land called Raulugummu, now overgrown with jungle, but evidently very suitable for cultivation. The story goes that anybody cultivating this field would, unless he propitiated the goddess with a human sacrifice, be himself devoured by Maveli Devata, who resides in a stone on a nearby hill. It is for this reason, the local Koyas and Reddis say, that the land now lies fallow.[2]

With the knowledge that the Reddis themselves, not only in the Godavari Region, but even in the far less backward Rampa Country, believe in the continued performance and even the necessity of human sacrifice in certain localities, we may now return to those concrete cases of the alleged ritual use of human blood which have occurred in recent years. All these cases were the object of police investigation, but here we are not concerned with their criminal but merely their ritual and psychological aspects. In the investigation of such topics, the anthropologist has naturally an advantage over the policeman; for not only does his different position *vis-à-vis* the aboriginals, his acquaintance with the general trend of their culture and last but not least, a more intimate contact, help to gain their confidence, but his knowledge of other primitive cultures enables him to realize the potential significance of apparently irrelevant or what might be regarded as improbable details.

The most recent of the cases of homicide that interest us in this context occurred in Kakishnur about a year and a half before my stay in that village. When I compiled the house-list of Kakishnur, I came across the house of a young widow living alone with two small children. This was somewhat unusual, for as a rule young widows either marry again or return to their home-village, and when I remarked upon this, it was whispered that her husband, Kechel Rajaya, had been killed the year before. The men responsible for the deed, three brothers of Suntre clan, had fled the village, and were now living in Kondamodalu on the British side of the Godavari.

The motive for the murder appeared obscure, though there were

1. I was unable to identify Jari on the map, and I have had no opportunity of visiting Malkanagiri since I learnt of this.

2. In an article *Man-eaters and Were-tigers*, Man, XXXI, 1951, No. 212, L. A. Cammlade refers to the practice of human sacrifice among "a jungle tribe near the banks of the lower Godavari," but does not specify whether the incident which he describes occurred among Koyas or Konda Reddis,

indications that Kechel Rajaya and the Suntre brothers worked for rival timber-merchants and that an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Suntre men's employer to draw all Reddis of Kakishnur to his side had preceded the murder. The only eye-witness was a young man called Ventla Kanaya, and it was from him that I heard the following story:—

"One day during the bamboo cutting season, Suntre Ramaya and his two brothers suggested that Kechel Rajaya and I should go with them to cut bamboos, and so we went all together along the path towards Pantapalli, till we came to a place called Bilimakal Bandam. Here the three Suntre men suddenly fell upon us and beat us with bamboos. I defended myself as well as I could, but Suntre Ramaya hit Rajaya with a heavy bamboo over the head, so that he fell to the ground. The next moment I managed to escape and ran back to the village. I was so frightened that at first I did not dare tell anybody what had happened.

Afterwards I heard that the three Suntre men had made a *puja* and cooked some food for a *konda devata*, the day before they killed Rajaya. Had I known that, I would never have gone with them to the jungle. They only made that *puja* because they meant to kill us.

When, after two days, Kechel Rajaya's absence caused alarm in the village, I told what I knew, and we all went to the forest and found the body on the place, where I had seen him fall. Then Suntre Ramaya boasted in front of all the villagers that he had killed Rajaya, and that he had mixed Rajaya's blood with grain and thrown the grain on the bamboos he had cut and on his field. But later, when policemen came to Kakishnur, the Suntre men ran away to Kondamodalu and later sent for their families."

So far Ventla Kanaya's story, the veracity of which is not seriously contested by anybody in Kakishnur. But most Reddis do not care to talk about the incident, and many pretend that just in those days they were "on a visit to relations in a neighbouring village."[1] All agreed, however, that the Suntre brothers had emigrated to Kondamodalu, and a few months later I found them there living in three houses a furlong or so from the main village. The Reddi headman of Kondamodalu told me that he knew all about the murder of Kechel Rajaya, but neither he nor any other villager seemed to mind the Suntre brothers' presence.

Another case of homicide had occurred in Kakishnur several years before, and in this too the same three Suntre men were involved. The victim was the late *patel* Buzar Zogreddi, a member of the family in which both the dignity of *pujari* and headman are hereditary. He

1. A merchant woman, for whom the murdered man had worked, confirmed Ventla Kanaya's story and added that she was among the people who had gone to the forest to find the body and that she had noticed mutilations evidently made by a knife.

seems to have been a strong personality with considerable influence in the village. His widow, a very old, but still lively lady and incidentally one of the few Reddi women with completely white hair, told me the circumstances of her husband's death:

" Several years ago, when Kanaya, whose wedding you saw the other day, was still a young boy, my husband went to bathe in the Godavari with our eldest son, who has since died. On the way back Suntre Ramaya, Sintal Rajaya, Suntre Kanaya and Suntre Lachmaya ambushed them and threw heavy stones at my husband. My son came running home and told me, and so I rushed to the spot. We found that the four men had dragged my husband to the river bank and were collecting wood to burn the body. I saw that my husband's head was broken and the brain was coming out. Then I cried: 'Why did you kill my husband? What has he done to you,' But they replied, that they had not killed him but found him like that on the path. But if that had been true, why didn't they bring him to the village, so that we could arrange a proper funeral? Then I called all the villagers and they saw the body, and watched it till the police came. Then we did not know that the murderers had drenched a cloth in my husband's blood and buried it in the ground. But later it came out, for when the police arrived the Suntre men unearthed the cloth and threw it into the Godavari.

My husband had no quarrel with the four men who killed him, but for a long time he had quarrelled with our merchant. Our merchant wanted the men of Kakishnur to work every day in the forest, but my husband advised them to go one day to their fields and the next day to cut bamboos. So our merchant was always very cross with him.

Before the police arrived, our merchant came to the village and threatened that if I told anybody how my husband had died, he would let me and all my children starve; but he promised that if I kept quiet, he would always give me food even though there was no man in the house to work for him, and that he would give me fifty rupees and two bullocks as well.

What could I do? We had to live, and so I kept quiet when the police came and all the other villagers too, for they were afraid of our merchant. Later he gave me two bullocks and also five pieces of paper and he said that this was a new kind of money and that I would get ten rupees for each paper. This was a lie, and I only got five rupees for each paper. But our merchant kept his word about the food, and has always given us grain. Now my son works for him and he has given him money for his wedding."

The circumstances of Zogreddi's death are common knowledge among the Reddis. But to test their reaction I once asked a large group of Kakishnur men, who were gossiping over the cooking of food for a wedding, about the fate of Zogreddi's murderers.

Hypocritically they answered that, not tolerating them any longer in their village, they had driven them out and that the Suntre brothers were now living in Kondamodalu; but they failed to mention that this had happened, not after Zogreddi's death, but several years later, after the murder of Kechel Rajaya. Only one of the men involved in the murder of Zogreddi, namely Sintal Rajaya, left Kakishnur soon after the event and settled in Chintapalli beyond the State border.

Another murder among Reddis occurred some four years ago in Katkur, when Sonkal Komreddi of Katkur was killed by Matla Motaya, who subsequently went to live on the British side of the Godavari. It is rumoured that the murderer cut off the head and the fingers of the victim and buried them before he threw the corpse into the Godavari. But since I could obtain no eye-witness account I am not inclined to attach particular weight to this circumstance, except as proof that the Reddis do consider such mutilations of a corpse as within the bounds of probability.

We have now come to the end of our evidence and are in a position to review the whole complex of human sacrifice and associated beliefs. Two outstanding facts will easily be agreed upon: the belief in *patudu donga* seeking victims for human sacrifice still has the power to inspire fear throughout the Reddi country, and the festival on the Papi Konda is fundamentally different from all those other Reddi rites which we have considered in the previous section.

Let us specify the first statement. Whether the practice of kidnapping victims for human sacrifice does exist or does not, the belief in its existence is a cultural reality, just as the belief in deities and spirits or in the powers of witches and magicians. It finds concrete social expression in the suspicion with which, at certain times, Reddis view each other and particularly visitors from other villages, and occasionally in the misdirected action against persons erroneously taken for *patudu donga,* as in the case of the luckless Reddi of Rampa, who had already received a sound beating before he would disclose his identity to his panicky fellow-villagers. The scare of *patudu donga* appears to be confined to two seasons of the year, *i.e.,* to the time before harvest and the time of the preparation of the fields before sowing. This might suggest a connection with agricultural rites, but we have no evidence that the Reddis themselves believe in such a connection. The only reason for the sacrifice of human beings ever mentioned is the necessity of appeasing Maveli Devata, who would spread death and disease in the village neglecting her cult. The strong belief in this inexorable necessity may account for the curious attitude towards those villages reputed to worship Maveli Devata. There is neither horror, indignation or contempt in the comments on the practices of Maveli's devotees; though all Reddis are naturally anxious that no member of their own village should fall victim to *patudu donga,* they seem to recognise that

the procuring and sacrifice of victims is unavoidable and more or less legitimate; for to leave the goddess unappeased would probably bring even greater harm to the whole countryside. This idea may be one of the reasons why, in spite of their recurring panic, they are generally averse from discussing the matter and certainly never seek the protection of outsiders against this real or imaginary danger.

It seems hardly probable that so general a belief as that of *patudu donga* and the practices connected with the cult of Maveli Devata, should be without any foundation. But whether half a century or only ten years have passed since the last victims were sacrificed to avert her wrath, or whether spasmodical revivals of the ritual occur even in our days it is impossible to decide. However insistent a Reddi may be about the existence of *patudu donga,* no Reddi today admits having known a man, woman or child, who actually disappeared in this mysterious way, and the evidence of those Reddis of Tumileru, who pretend they have actually put a band of *patudu donga* to flight need not be taken too seriously: two harmless parties meeting in the dark may have easily mistaken each other for kidnappers.

If on the other hand the practice is not yet dead, detection by outsiders is well nigh impossible as long as the Reddis believe in the inevitability of the sacrifices and are too afraid, both of the wrath of the goddess and the revenge of her devotees, to bring the practice to an end. With settlements widely scattered over hills difficult of access, and frequently shifted to other sites, and a population unstable and fluctuating from one village to the other, the disappearance of a person must remain unknown unless it is reported by relations and co-villagers. Under these circumstances it would be just as rash to say that kidnapping belongs to the past, as it would be irresponsible to assert its continued existence. The material here presented does not allow of any conclusion, but in an area where a documented human sacrifice occurred as late as 1879, and which borders on the home of Meriah sacrifice, the *onus probandi* lies not only with those who consider the spasmodic occurrence of ritual murder in recent times a plausible possibility.

In the case of the famous festival on Papi Konda we have only one statement, namely that of the Reddis of Tumileru, expressively linking it with the practice of human sacrifice. On the other hand there are innumerable indications that secrecy surrounded this festival, as well as its scene and the ritual objects. The nearer one comes to Papi Konda, the greater becomes the Reddis' reluctance to discuss it. In far off villages like Errametta and even Katkur, men may be found who admit having attended the ceremony in their youth, while every Reddi of Tekpalli, Kakishnur and Parantapalli will protest that he has never been to the feast on Papi Konda, the celebration of which has long been abandoned. This attitude would be explicable if they associated the festival with a cult, which they considered likely to shed

opprobrium on its devotees in the eyes of outsiders, even though the central rite of this cult had long been discontinued at the time when they themselves took part in the festival.

An analysis of its description by Andel Venkatreddi quoted on p. 207 reveals several features which differentiate the Vana Devudu Panduga from all other Reddi feasts. Its whole organization lay in the hands of a few men, the *pujari* of the Pogal clan and his assistants, who alone furnished food and sacrificial animals for the assembly. The sacrificial offerings remained hidden and the central rite of the feast, the invocation of the deities and the slaughter of the victim, occurred in a secret place, hidden from the eyes of the crowd. Only men of the Pogal clan had access to this place, apparently a cave, and to safeguard themselves against any disturbance they issued warnings to other men not to wander about lest they should fall victims to the deity. Secrecy of this nature is otherwise entirely foreign to Reddi ritual in which the offering of food and the killing of the sacrificial animal takes place in front of the worshippers and constitutes the climax of the ceremony. In the Papi Konda feast only the blood partly mixed with rice was shown to the assembly, but there seems to have been no visible indication of the nature of the victims. Equally unique is the use of a jealously guarded ritual object such as two brass plates. All these elements fit badly into the picture of Reddi culture that we have hitherto gained, and I have no doubt that their origin lies in a far less primitive civilization. The scattering of blood-soaked rice in the forest, on the other hand, is a familiar Reddi custom, which we have observed in the case of the Konda Razu Panduga; it seems indeed only a variation of the sowing of grain soaked in blood during the Bhumi Devata Panduga.

Mystery veils not only the main rite of the feast, but also the identity of the deity in whose service it is performed. The name of the feast, Vana Devudu Panduga, suggests the rain-god as the central figure of the feast, but although he and the four other so-called Panduvulus are undoubtedly invoked on this occasion, there is no certainty that he was regarded as the recipient of all the sacrifices. Andel Venkatreddi speaks indeed of a female *konda devata,* who licks up the sacrificial blood, in the shape of a tiger and is believed to devour any person straying about in the jungle during the night of the feast. *Konda devata,* however, means only mountain deity, and all Reddis agree that there are many *konda devata,* both male and female. On my return to Parantapalli in 1943 I enquired once more about the feast on Papi Konda, and several men admitted then that both Vana Devudu and Maveli Devata were worshipped on that occasion. This makes it probable that if in the past humans were killed on Papi Konda, they were sacrificed to Maveli Devata, and not to the rain-god. For Maveli Devata, is the goddess reputed to accept only human sacrifices, and usually worshipped on hill-tops, while practically all other Reddi ceremonies take place at no

great distance from the villages. A parallel between the feast performed in her honour in the Rampa Country and the feast on Papi Hill is therefore not altogether unwarranted.

Summarising our argument, I believe we are justified in saying that strong evidence speaks in favour of the former occurrence of human sacrifice among Reddis. The theory that at one time human beings have been sacrificed on Papi Konda provides a plausible explanation for all the known facts, as well as for the extraordinary reaction of the Reddis in the vicinity at the mere mention of the festival, none of which can to my mind be rendered intelligible by any alternative hypothesis.

Against this one may argue that a conclusion reached by inference, even though of high probability, is somewhat unsatisfactory in a matter where it should be possible to procure direct proof. No doubt if we were dealing with events lying several centuries back and our information was not the statements of living persons, but descriptions and allusions in contemporary documents, we should have little hesitation in regarding the existence of human sacrifice at that period as proven with reasonable certainty. But in our case the position is different. For can we accept a conclusion based on indirect evidence while there are men alive, who might be able to tell us the full facts? The relevant question is whether or not the living eye-witnesses could be induced to change their minds and take us into their confidence. Under the circumstances prevailing I believe that such a possibility hardly exists, except if an investigator had the opportunity of spending several years in intimate contact with the Reddis. For here we have a situation quite different from that of a primitive tribe with little experience of strangers. Sympathy and patience may there break the barriers within a comparatively short time. But the Reddis have already reaped full experience of outsiders and realize only too well the inconvenience which an injudicious word and the consequent police enquiries cause not only to those suspected but to the whole village. They know, moreover, that human sacrifice is regarded by the authorities in much the same light as murder, and that once they admitted their participation in the rite in past years, nobody would trust their assertion that it has since been abandoned; nor have they any assurance that even a former attendance at a feast connected with human sacrifice would not be made the subject of persecution. Silence is therefore their best policy, even towards those whom they recognize as well disposed and understanding. For no demonstration of sympathy can outweigh the experience of half a century unless it is accompanied by prolonged and concrete achievements for the Reddis' benefit.

Now that we have conceded the probability of human sacrifice having at some time played a role in Reddi ritual, we may scrutinize once more the cases of homicide already described. The murderers of Kechel Rajaya are reported to have performed a *puja* for a *konda*

*devata* before the murder and to have scattered the victim's blood mixed with rice over their cut bamboos and their fields. Of the latter deed they are even said to have boasted in public. The belief in the fertilizing power of human blood which lies at the root of the whole head-hunting complex as well as of the Meriah sacrifice is too well known to need any demonstration, and nobody will doubt that if rice mixed with Kechel Rajaya's blood was scattered over the murderers' fields it was done to increase their fertility. That Ventla Kanaya mentioned the *puja* for a *konda devata* as proof of the Suntre brother's deliberate intention to murder is only understandable if human sacrifice had once formed part of a cult known to Reddis. We remember that during the Vana Devudu Panduga blood-soaked rice was scattered through the forest, and that a *konda devata* was believed to lick up the blood of the victims. The same practice of scattering blood-soaked rice is moreover connected with the feast for Konda Razu, who is usually described as one of the *konda devata,* and though at present the grain is mixed with the blood of a pig, the Reddis of Tumileru said that formerly human blood might have been used for that purpose.

From whatever side we regard the circumstances of Kechel Rajaya's death, we cannot escape the conclusion that the Reddis themselves believe in the ritual use of human blood. Whether on that particular occasion this use was actually made and whether the murderers of Kechel Rajaya had performed a *puja* for a *konda devata* before the deed, is irrelvant in this connection. The assertion that such a rite was performed and the fact that this assertion is given credence by many people in Kakishnur seem to prove the Reddis' familiarity with such practices.

The ethnologically most interesting element in the death of Zogreddi is the allegation that his murderers drenched a cloth with his blood and buried it. I fail to see any reason why the widow should have invented this detail, which makes no difference to the guilt of the men accused of the deed, or how the rumour could have arisen, unless the drenching of a cloth with the victim's blood is a recognized method of preserving human blood for later ritual use. And this tallies with the account given by the Reddis of Rampa village of the human sacrifices for Maveli Devati, during which a cloth was soaked with blood in order to serve as a substitute for a victim on future occasions.

To describe the two cases of homicide in question as ritual murder would undoubtedly be unjustified; for their primary motive lay presumably in the economic field. What the accumulated evidence does justify, however, is the assumption that in the case of Kechel Rajaya the victim's blood was ultimately used for ritual purposes and that in Buzar Zogreddi's case such a use was meditated if not accomplished. And even those who may consider that the grounds for this assumption are insufficient must admit that the belief in the ritual value of human

blood must be firmly rooted in the Reddis' minds if allegations such as those brought forward after the death of both Kechel Rajaya and Buzar Zogreddi could be made and generally accepted.

For ethnology it is of little importance whether a custom is abandoned a few decades sooner or later, once it has become clear that it has no chance of survival in the face of modern developments. Human sacrifice and all its kindred practices are doomed in the Reddi country, if they are not already dead, and isolated instances of the ritual use of human blood interest us mainly as spontaneous expressions of beliefs still lingering in people's minds. Though probably familiar to most, and practised by at least certain sections of the Reddis for some time, human sacrifice does not appear to be very deeply rooted in their culture. Its perpetration seems to have been confined to a few localities, and there is no indication that the average Reddi village community would ever have aspired to the securing or sacrificing of human victims. A comparison with the head-hunting rites of Nagas or the Meriah sacrifices of Konds, which occupied a central and dominating position in tribal life, is therefore hardly permissible, and it seems that the origin of the practice lies outside the precincts of Reddi culture. Where is it then, that we must seek for its source?

The most striking connection with customs of other populations is afforded by the cult of Maveli Devata. For Maveli is evidently identical with the goddess Mamili of the Koyas of whom the Rev. J. Cain states that her favours are always sought when the young crops are springing up and that in years gone by human sacrifices were often offered to her.[1] In this case too, her devotees were suspected of kidnapping strangers in their search for victims. That the ritual use of human blood in connection with agricultural activities still prevails among Marias of Bastar can be seen from an incident at Madder in the Bhopalpatnam zamindari quoted by W. V. Grigson:[2] "A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937, in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru Zamindari (*i.e.*, Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Dorla[3] or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Maria would not venture down to Madder) before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice before sowing, confident of securing thereby

1. Rev. J. Cain, *The Koi, a Southern Tribe of the Gond*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. XIII, 1881, p. 413. seq.

2. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, London 1938, p. 221.

3. Grigson speaks of Koyas as Dorlas.

a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot." I think, there can be no doubt, that this practice belongs to the same ritual complex of human sacrifice, and is clear evidence of the belief in the fertilizing power of human blood among the Gond population of Bastar. It is only one step from the soaking of rice-seed in the water in which the victim's blood has been dissolved to the mixing of grain with human blood, and the alleged action of Kechel Rajaya's murderers gains creditability in the light of Grigson's evidence. In two of the three cases of human sacrifice which within the last ten years have come to light in Bastar, the motive was the desire to increase the fertility of the soil; Verrier Elwin, who gives a detailed description of the circumstances, comes to the conclusion that they " seem to have depended for their efficacy on the power of blood which as the source of life is also the cause of fertility."[1]

We have seen that the Vana Devudu Panduga is closely associated with the cult of the Pandava brothers, who play otherwise no great role in Reddi ritual. The Koyas, on the other hand, pay great reverence to the Pandava brothers, and Cain states that Bhima is often invoked at ceremonies; the Reddis themselves say that Bhimana is a Koya god and that the Koyas perform the Bhimana Panduga in order to induce rain (cf. p. 224). Thus not only the cult of Maveli Devata but also the rites on the Papi Konda are suggestive of Koya influence. Moreover, in view of the fact that human sacrifice has its established place among the Gonds of Bastar, there is a strong probability that the complex of human sacrifice belongs in this part of the country rather to Koya than to Reddi culture.

We must also remember that it was not only aboriginals who were addicted to this rite, but that until a few centuries ago in Jeypore and other Hindu States human victims were publicly sacrificed on various occasions. Isolated cases of ritual murder, committed in secret, occurred moreover among the plains populations of the Telugu country until recent years, and the belief in the efficacy of human sacrifice is not dead even among the higher Hindu castes. Thus in 1936 a man in Guntur District killed a child in the belief that the sacrifice would help him to unearth a treasure, and was subsequently condemned to transportation for life. In 1939 a Kammar from Tekpaka, a village near Kunavaram, was charged with having sacrificed a Koya child to improve his rice-field; though he was acquitted in the Sessions Court for lack of proof, the very occurrence of charge and trial surely shows how real even in our days is the idea of human sacrifice, not only to Reddis, but also to the Hindu population of the Godavari valley.

Human sacrifice, in the form in which it seems to have been practised by certain groups of Reddis, was thus not a custom peculiar to them

1. *Maria Murder and Suicide*, Bombay, 1943, p. 75.

alone, and the available evidence favours indeed the assumption that the Reddis have adopted the rite from a neighbouring population in the perhaps not too distant past.

### *Deities and Spirits*

The Reddi's attitude towards the unseen powers that he deems responsible for successes and failures in his struggle for life is largely reflected by the rites and ceremonies described in the preceding sections. The recognition of his dependence upon these powers lies at the root of each of the ritual acts that accompany the various phases of his communal activities. Speculation as to man's position towards the gods and the why and wherefore of life and death is not the prerogative of nations of advanced civilization, but the Reddi does not belong to the philosophers among primitive races, and seems to give little thought to the nature of the gods he has learnt to propitiate.

There is no unanimity among the Reddis as to the relative prominence of their numerous deities, but judging rather from what they do than from what they say, we come to the conclusion that the *konda devata* and Bhumi Devata rank foremost in the ritual life of the tribe as a whole. In the Godavari Region Mutielamma may seem to challenge their pre-eminence, but she is unknown even by hearsay in the Northern Hills and her cult is therefore evidently not an integral part of older Reddi religion.

### *Hill and Jungle Deities*

The Reddis believe in a plurality of *konda devata* or mountain deities. "Just as there are many leaves on a tree," said a Reddi of Anantavaram, "so there are many *konda devata* in the world; just as there is not one single tiger in the jungle, but many tigers, so there are many *konda devata.*" The hills are evidently peopled by imagined *konda devata* and every prominent peak is considered as the seat of a *devata* known and addressed as the deity of that particular mountain. During most sacrificial rites the *pujari* or the *veju* invokes all the hill-deities whose names spring to his mind, but he is generally unable to identify the various hills mentioned in his incantation, except those closest to his village. Most Reddis say that there are male and female *konda devatas,* but I believe that the question of sex hardly ever occurs to the Reddi when he propitiates the hill-deities.

Many *veju* assert that they can see the *konda devata* in their trances and dreams, and that they look human. A particularly anthropomorphic picture of the hill-deities was drawn by a woman of Parantapalli, who told me that near each village there are four or five *konda devata* living in the hills. There they have houses much the same as the houses of the Reddis, which ordinary people cannot see; but the *veju* can see these houses even though they do not go there. The *konda devata* are

very well dressed and have lots of jewels; they marry and have children, work and eat, have fields and go hunting; for "if they did not work, how could they find food?"

This, however, does not reflect the general idea of the hill-deities, and most Reddis believe that the *konda devata* roam where the forest is densest and where the hills are seamed with rocks and caves. They are not believed to dwell in one place, and particularly in the evening it is thought that they wander through the jungle, the hills and the valleys.

Certain places in the forest serve them as seats, but these are not recognizable by man, and if a Reddi inadvertently desecrates one of these resting places of a *konda devata* by defecating there or defiling it in any other way, he may incur the anger of the deity, who will then visit him with sickness and must be appeased by offerings and sacrifices. It is then for the *veju* to discover which *konda devata* has caused the sickness and what offerings would be acceptable to the outraged deity. But, unless offended, the *konda devatas* are by no means ill-disposed towards men, and there is the general belief that the welfare of the crops is partly dependent on their favour and that at all agricultural rites the deities of the hills must be propitiated together with the Earth Mother. The particular domain of the *konda devata* is, however, the forest. They are not only believed to have planted the caryota palms at the beginning of the world, but also to exercise some manner of control over all those activities which take place in the jungle. Therefore a special ceremony, the Karra Panduga, has to be performed for the hill-deities at the beginning of the bamboo felling season, so that no harm may befall the workers. This appears to be a modern variation of the Konda Razu Panduga, which secures protection for the men when out hunting (cf. p. 197).

Konda Razu is evidently one of the *konda devata,* and according to some Reddis the most powerful of all. A *veju* of Tumileru went so far as to assert, that Konda Razu is the greatest of all gods. He said, that he could see Konda Razu in his dreams and that at the time of the festival the god took possession of him and that he then danced in a state of unconsciousness.

*Konda sati* appears to be an alternative term of *konda devata;* the word *sati* suggests a female character but I have found no indication that the Reddis use this expression only in regard to female hill-deities.

If not in name then in his association with the jungle, Katamaya, the god of the chase, is allied to the *konda devata.* We have already quoted the prayers and offerings that the Reddis address to Katamaya when success attends the hunt, and from these it is clear that Katamaya is attributed with power over the wild animals in the forest. In his character as well as the form of his cult, Katamaya reminds us of the benevolent deities of the chase among primitive food-gatherers, as for instance the goddess Garelamaisama of the Chenchus. A significant

light on the Reddis' conception of Katamaya, and of gods in general, is thrown by a remark of an old man of Kakishnur. He had just told me of the offering to Katamaya that hunters were accustomed to make after they had brought down an animal, and when I asked him where Katamaya lived he pointed to the place beside him and said: "Just here, where we are talking, here is Katamaya, between you and me." Could there be a simpler or more lucid explanation of the omnipresence of a deity?

No sanctuaries and material objects are devoted to the cult of the *konda devata*. Their home is the jungle, and any part of it is equally suitable for their worship; dwelling in the lofty heights of hills, they do not hover near stones or wooden posts erected by man and generally shun human habitation. "If the *konda devata* came to our village," said Kopal Gangamma of Parantapalli, "we should all be doomed to die."

The offerings most acceptable to the *konda devata* are pigs and chickens, and it is only at the ceremonies of recent introduction, such as the Karra Panduga, that a goat may be sacrificed. The Reddis have no mythology to explain the origin of the hill-gods and the source of their power. "The *konda devatas* are and have always been, just like the forest and the mountains," is a very general conception. The Reddi takes their presence for granted, and as long as he desires to roam unharmed through their realm in pursuit of game, to enjoy the fruits of his hill-fields, to extract bamboo and timber from the forest and to remain free of illness and disease, he must humour them by frequent and recurrent sacrifices. Thus propitiated they will ward off all evils and speak to man through the mouth of the *veju,* those men and women who serve as intermediaries between man and the supernatural world.

The moral behaviour of men does not seem to concern the *konda devata,* or indeed any other Reddi deity. In the Reddi's mind religious beliefs are divorced from ethical conceptions, and any suggestion that such offences as clan-incest or adultery might arouse the wrath of the gods, was invariably turned down by my informants and sometimes even greeted with unconcealed hilarity. To the Reddis the field of divine interest is strictly limited: the deities demand from man the observance of certain taboos, such as the taboos on the eating of fruits or crops before the particular first-fruits ceremony, and above all the sacrifice of animals and the offering of food at the traditional feasts. The relations between man and man are to them a matter of indifference; there is no divine vengeance of crime or reward for virtuous behaviour.

Does the Reddi think of the *konda devata* in terms of affection and piety? I do not believe that we can answer this question in the affirmative, and I would even hesitate to describe his cult of the hill-gods as 'worship.' Sacrifices and incantations are necessary to stave off

misfortune and to advance prosperity, but they are not expressions of adoration and faith. Never once did I hear a Reddi speak of the *konda devata* with the natural confidence and intimacy with which a Konyak speaks of the sky-god Gawang[1] or a Gond of his clan-god, and there are, to my knowledge, no stories of *konda devata* enacting the role of the merciful and benevolent benefactor of the unfortunate, as for instance the goddess Garelamaisama of the Chenchus.[2]

It thus seems that the *konda devata,* although believed sensible to man's prayers and offerings, are not attributed with such human qualities as pity or love.

We would, I believe, misinterpret the religious ideas of the Reddis, if we assumed that the *konda devata* were a class of deities clearly distinguished from all the other gods. Most deities are thought to live in the forest and the hills, and I have often heard Reddis describe as *konda devata* one deity or another who is otherwise credited with a different nature. Thus Golla Lachmaya the *veju* of Gogulapudi, mentioned Potrazu as one of the greatest *konda devata,* though this god is generally considered as the companion or younger brother of such village-goddesses as Mutielamma. The statement that during the Vana Devudu Panduga a *konda devata* licks the blood of the victims and threatens all those straying in the jungle must probably also be regarded in the light of the Reddis' tendency to think of practically every deity except Bhumi Devata as a *konda devata.* This tendency, which is particularly noticeable in the hill-villages, would be well understandable if in former times the Reddis knew of no other supernatural powers than the deities of the hills and the forests and the Earth Mother.

### *Bhumi Devata*

Bhumi Devata or Bhu Devi, the Earth goddess, is perhaps the only deity of the Reddi pantheon who is entirely and unalienably well disposed towards men. From her teeming womb spring the crops that nourish and sustain the Reddis throughout large parts of the year, and they therefore regard her with gratitude and reverence, unmarred by any latent fear.

It is not to avert her wrath that the Reddi offers pigs and chickens to Bhumi Devata when he entrusts his seed-grain to the earth, but in the belief that the flowing blood will increase her fertility and encourage Bhumi Devata to grant him an abundant harvest. "Even if we did not celebrate the Bhu Devi Panduga, the Earth goddess would not be angered," said the men of Gogulapudi "we do it out of the gladness of our hearts; she is our Mother, how could she harm us?" We have

1. Cf. C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Religion and Ethics among the Konyak Nagas and other Indian Tribes,* in 'Essays in Anthropology presented to R. B. Sarat Chandra Roy, Lucknow, 1942, pp. 159-163.

2. *The Chenchus,* pp. 202-209.

mentioned already that the spilling of blood on the seed-grain on this occasion is undoubtedly believed to have a direct fertilizing effect of a purely magical nature, and the scattering of rice mixed with human blood, referred to on p. 210 must be regarded similarly and not as an offering to the Earth deity. There is not the slightest indication that among Reddis Bhumi Devata has ever been propitiated by human sacrifice.

In prayers and songs Bhumi Devata is usually addressed as Earth Mother, *bhumi talli,* and sometimes the words 'you in the earth' are added. The belief that she dwells in the earth is universal, and the *veju* Narpal Viraya touched the ground with the palm of his hand, when I asked him where Bhumi Devata lived, and said: "Here under the ground dwells the Earth Mother."

There is no other cult so intimately interwoven with the Reddis' most important occupation, the raising of crops, as the worship of the Earth Mother. Like the *konda devata,* she is not represented by any particular object, such as a sacred stone or a tree, and is never worshipped in the village. For the earth is her visible form and the fields are her altar. Pigs are the sacrificial animals most appropriate to her cult, but in times of stress chickens may be substituted. Reddis do not consider goats a fitting sacrifice for Bhumi Devata.

In two widely separated places, Parantapalli on the Godavari, and Kumalvaru near Dharakonda in the Gudem Hills, I heard of sacrifices at sowing time for Sita, whom my informants described as identical with Bhumi Devata. The identification of the venerable Earth Mother with the heroine of the Ramayana is restricted to those places where Hindu influence is strong, and is perhaps an attempt to cloak in Hindu garb an ancient aboriginal cult.

### *The Pandava Deities*

We have noted already that the Reddi connects the famous five stones on the top of Papi Konda with the Pandava brothers of Hindu legend. To the Reddi, however, the Panduvulu, as he calls them, are not mythical heroes, but deities, and only two of them are consistently given the names of their demi-human prototypes. These two are Arjuna and Bhimana. The former is of little consequence among the Reddis, but Bhimana is, at least by some, attributed with the creation of the world.

According to Narpal Viraya, the *veju* of Kakishnur, it was Bhimana who made the earth, the hills and man. But he did not make the gods. Bhimana made the first Reddis, one man and one woman, and putting them into a gourd, he let them down to the earth. The man's name was Tamandu, but Viraya did not know the name of the woman. He was certain, however, that these two were the first people in the land. At every feast he thinks of Bhimana, Arjuna and the three other Pandu-

vulu, Vana Devudu, Sarlamma and Gunatamma, and sometimes he kills chickens in their name. Golla Lachmaya, *pujari* and *veju* of Gogulapudi, confirmed the statement that Bhimana created the world and said that he also made the *konda devata,* Bhumi Devata, and all the other gods. Yet though their maker, he is not a god of the Reddis, and is never invoked at feasts. It is only the Koyas, who pray to Bhimana; if there is no rain, they will perform the Bhimana Panduga so that he should send rain.

This view of Lachmaya is probably correct. Bhimana is a Koya deity, and though the belief in his role as creator is familiar to a good many Reddis, his cult has been adopted by only a few and the overwhelming majority of Reddis still confess that they have no idea whatsoever how either the world or the human race came into being.

Vana Devudu, alias Gali Devudu,[1] the god of rain and wind, is familiar to all Reddis, but his regular cult seems to be confined to Papi Konda. We have seen that the Pogal men of Kutturvada are reputed to be able to perform a rite by which they can induce Vana Devudu to send or withhold rain; but other Reddis deny all knowledge of any rain-making rites. Even *veju* are said to be powerless to produce rain.

Gali Devudu's presence in a village is as dangerous as that of many other gods, and he may afflict the inhabitants with illness. If such misfortune occurs a *veju* is called, and when he has divined that Gali Devudu is the cause of the disaster, a ceremony will be performed to wreck his evil influence. The villagers will collect fresh *nim* leaves, tie them above their house doors, and stick them into the thatch. Then they will bring one pot of water for each house and put the turmeric used in divining into the water. Each householder burns some incense near his pot and promises Gali Devudu a cock, if he leaves the village and restores the inhabitants' health. The water from each pot is finally poured on to the ground in a straight line in front of each house.

While rain is ascribed to Vana Devudu, no deity is credited with the production of thunder and lightning. The men of Gogulapudi when asked the cause of thunder, remarked with surprising naivity: "Somebody near the Godavari must make all that noise, somewhere in the east; it is not done on our side."

Nothing but the name is known of Nakula and Sahedeva, whom the Pogal men regard as the two remaining Panduvulu. Other Reddis count Sarlamma and her sister Guntanamma among the Panduvulu, regardless of the fact that these are evidently female deities. The extraordinary vagueness and elasticity of the Reddis' ideas of the Pandava 'brothers' is reflected in Narpal Viraya's statement that Sarlamma, who is one of the Panduvulu and resides on Papi Konda, is both male and female, and higher than all other deities. Karkal Bhimaya the

1. Gali Devudu must not be confused with *gali*, the malevolent ghosts of deceased humans (cf. p. 143).

*kulam pedda* of the Reddis on the left of the Godavari bank, confirmed that Sarlamma is the greatest deity, but said that she dwelt on Pedda Konda, a mountain near Rekapalli where annually a big festival is held, but he did not include her among the Panduvulu. To the majority of Reddis, however, the name of Sarlamma is completely unknown though she is worshipped by practically all Koyas from Palampet, some hundred miles north-east of the Godavari gorges, as far south as Paloncha.

### *Village Deities*

It would seem that the conception of a Village Deity was originally foreign to the Reddis. Their habit of living in scattered groups of houses, frequently shifted from one site to the other, could hardly have given rise to a belief in a deity dwelling in the village and particularly concerned with its welfare. Yet, catholic as their attitude towards all deities of neighbouring populations has generally been, they have extended reverence to a number of those mother-goddesses whose cult is so prominent a feature of rustic religion in the Telugu country and among Koyas and Gonds.

Consequently most groups of Reddis observe at present besides the cult of the hill-gods and the Earth Mother, also that of a goddess dwelling close to their settlements and represented by tangible objects such as sacred stones, posts, trees, or perhaps an earthen pot kept in a special shrine. These deities are more specifically linked with organized village-life, and it is in the bigger and permanent villages that their cult has assumed particular prominence. The common Telugu idea, that the village-goddesses are by nature maleficent and the bringers of epidemics, seems to have become slightly obscured and the Reddis do not regard them with particular awe.

In the Godavari Region and part of the Rampa country Mutielamma is revered in practically every Reddi village, but in the Northern Hills, where even her name is generally unknown, her place is largely filled by Gangamma Devi. Neither Mutielamma nor Gangamma Devi are typical Reddi deities. Their cult is common to numerous tribes and castes, each of whom has moulded the goddess according to its own culture-pattern.

Even among the Reddis of the Godavari Region the assimilation of the cult of Mutielamma into the general ritual system has not everywhere followed the same lines. In Gogulapudi, for instance, which is as conservative as any remote mountain village, Mutielamma is, in practice, hardly different from one of the *konda devata,* except that a particular stone and a particular place are sacred to her. But that place lies far away in the jungle, and it is only during the great annual feasts that a few men repair there to perform the traditional sacrifical rites. Thus Mutielamma, although reputed to look after the village as a whole, is

here almost as divorced from village life as the older gods, and the women take no part in her cult.

Very different is the position in the large settlements on the river-bank. Here the sanctuary of Mutielamma is close to the village and receives care and attention throughout the year. Prayers and gifts of food are offered to the deity at regular intervals, usually on Saturdays, and before such rites as the first-fruits ceremonies the women of the village clean and decorate the stone, post or tree representing the goddess.

The prayers quoted in a previous section (pp. 184, 200) render it clear that Mutielamma is held mainly responsible for the health of the villagers. Though she has to a certain extent lost the character of a deity of disease with which she is credited by the lower Telugu castes, Mutielamma is by no means entirely benevolent, but helps or harms man in proportion to his care or negligence of her cult.

Linked with the cult of Mutielamma are those of her younger sister Nukelamma and of the male god Potrazu, of whose relation to these goddesses most Reddis seem to have no clear conception though the Koyas and the lower Hindu castes of the Telugu country revere him as the companion and sometimes the younger brother of Mutielamma and other village goddesses.[1] Nukelamma is sometimes propitiated after a *puja* for Mutielamma, but she is of little importance and is known to only a minority of Reddis. In some villages a carved wooden post of roughly phallic form can be found near the place sacred to Mutielamma. This post represents Potrazu, and on the occasion of ceremonies it is washed and decorated together with the stone or tree sacred to Mutielamma. But neither Nukelamma nor Potrazu have secured a firm and permanent place in Reddi ritual. Here and there their cult has been adopted by some groups of Reddis, but often it is dropped again after a short while. Thus we find close to the village of Kondepudi a typical Potrazu post, slightly decayed and overgrown by jungle, which for years has not been the object of any ritual act, while in the same village both Mutielamma and Nukelamma are propitiated every week.

1. A. Aiyappan describes in his article *Siva seals of Mohenjodaro* (Journal Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. V. 1939, pp. 404, 405) the character of Potrazu as follows: "The Koyas and the backward Hindu castes of the Telugu country worship a godling, Potturaju by name. The name of the godling is itself significant. It means literally 'the male king.' Pottu in the sister languages, Tamil and Malayalam, means the buffalo. Now, Potturaju is the younger brother of all the mother-goddesses of the Telugu folk pantheon, and three wooden rods, carved and looking very much like the *hanal* poles planted near Gond graves, representing Potturaju can be seen in front of all the mother-goddess shrines. Potturaju spends all his time in the company of the female deities. He stands between the villagers and the wrath of the mother-goddesses who are the distributors of pestilences. After offering sacrifices to the mother-goddesses, and requesting them to leave the village limits, the villagers utter the following conditional curse: "If you return again to our village we shall consider you as having committed incest with your younger brother, Potturaju. Potturaju is thus the protector of the villages from plagues and pestilence, and has precedence when offerings are made at the village shrines. Some of the carved rods representing Potturaju are phallic in form; his name is suggestive not only of masculinity but also of the buffalo; and his function is essentially that of protection, while the mother-goddesses are mainly malevolent."

A similar example is provided by the abandonment of the cult of the goddess Putelamma in Parantapalli. Till some fiteen years ago she had been regularly worshipped at a place near a waterfall, but since the death of the late *pujari,* in whose hands her cult had lain, no more *puja* have been performed for Putelamma, and now her name is almost forgotten. But at Kutturvada there are still two small stones lying at the foot of a tree, which are sacred to this goddess. Before a Kutturvada man goes on a journey he pays homage to these stones and prays to Putelamma for protection from wild beasts and evil men.

In a few villages we find, besides sanctuaries for a mother-goddess of individual name, a place sacred to Grama Devata or Ammavaru, the Village Mother. The people of Kutturvada, for instance, have set up a pair of upright stones, each about two feet high, at a small distance from the settlement, to serve as a seat for Grama Ammavaru; there she is given her share of the offerings at public feasts, but otherwise she receives little attention.

A curious confusion of ideas, not unnatural in a people subject to so many foreign religious influences, has occurred in Patakota, a *muttadar* village in the Northern Hills. There I was told that the Grama Devata, the special tutelary goddess of the village, was Patakota Kotamma, a *konda devata* staying on a hill, and that every month on a Sunday the *pujari* sacrificed for her a chicken in the jungle.

From the rites, accompanying the Gangamma Devi Panduga (cf. pp. 189-191) it is clear that Gangamma Devi is reckoned among the number of female deities dwelling in or near the village, who are characteristic of a stratum in Reddi religion undoubtedly later than that to which belongs the cult of the hill-deities and the Earth Mother.

### *Bhagavantaru*

While Mutielamma and the other village-goddesses, though to all appearance comparatively recent additions to the Reddi pantheon, are already definitely established in ritual and beliefs, the great Hindu god Bhagavantaru is a figure familiar only to a minority of Reddis. Yet to exclude him altogether from the gallery of deities would mean to ignore a powerful influence on the future development of Reddi religion. True, many Reddis have never heard the name Bhagavantaru, but there are, on the other hand, areas where he is recognized as one of the greatest gods.

At Kanivada, in the Northern Hills, the Reddis pray at every feast to Bhagavantaru whom they credit with the creation of the world and the human race. "Without Bhagavantaru," they say, "we cannot live." And in Siramkota, I was told that whenever a chicken is sacrificed for Bhumi Devata, it is also for Bhagavantaru. In the Godavari Region, however, the belief in Bhagavantaru has not yet taken root. The Reddis of Katkur, a village with a mixed population, assert that

they sometimes make a *puja* for Bhagavantaru in their house, offering him jaggery, dal and bananas, but in Gogulapudi even the *pujari* and *veju* declared that he had never before heard of a deity called Bhagavantaru.

### *Clan Deities*

Besides the deities whose cult is a communal affair conducted by the hereditary *pujari*, there exists a number of minor gods who are revered only by the members of certain clans. Although usually spoken of as housegods (*inti devudulu*), they have certain features of clan-deities, and we have described them as such in our discussion of the nature of Reddi clans. There we have already mentioned that a clan-deity may reside either in the house of a prominent member of the clan, or in a place in the jungle, and that not all clans possess such tutelar deities. It remains now to give some specific examples.

The Pogal people of Kutturvada and Parantapalli worship Singaramma, who is represented by a lump formed of mud and cow dung, and is kept in the *pujari's* attic. When some years ago he and a distant agnate relation rebuilt their houses, they made a *puja* for Singaramma. Ramaya set the idol in one corner of his house and placed four chickens in front of it. Then he took a knife in his hand, threw some grains of jawari-millet at the idol and said simply: Hail mother!

Then he killed the chickens, two for himself and two for his kinsmen. Each family cooked its chickens and other food in its own house, but finally all the food was placed beside the idol. It was then covered with a cloth and all present waited in silence, bowing several times to the goddess, whom they presumed to be eating the food. After some time they removed the cloth and Ramaya placed the idol in a basket, which he put into the attic. Then both families ate the sacrificial food together. At all annual feasts the idol is taken down and food is offered to Singaramma. Whenever Ramaya's father's brother Pogal Venkaya, who lives in Parantapalli, wants to make a *puja* for Singaramma, he must ascend the hill to Kutturvada, but I have not heard that men of Pogal clan from other villages go there for this purpose.

Not far from Parantapalli, and close to a perennial stream, stand two groups of upturned earthen pots, and in these pots the clan-deities of the Kopal and Vinel people are believed to have taken their seat. The tutelar deity of the Kopal clan is Devitamma and during the Mamidi Panduga all the Kopal men of Parantapalli repair to her sanctuary in the jungle and propitiate her with food offerings. In Kakishnur Devitamma is also worshipped by the Kechel and Vala people and she is thus not exclusively a deity of the Kopal clan. In the six pots put up by the Vinel people of Parantapalli, two deities, Rajalu and Kanalu, are supposed to reside, and their cult is, at least locally, confined to the Vinel clan.

Sometimes a small hut raised on poles and covered with a high conical grass roof, the total height not exceeding three feet is erected in the jungle to house a clan-god (Fig. 75), but much more frequently the clan-deities are represented by stones of insignificant shape, very much the same as those sacred to Mutielamma and other village goddesses. A man settling in a village where there are no other members of his clan, or where his clan-deity has as yet no sanctuary, may put up a stone, and in doing so he is convinced that the god will take up residence therein and accept the proffered sacrifice.

The psychological attitude of a Reddi to his particular clan-deity is not very different from that adopted towards the tutelary deity of his village, be it Mutielamma or any other of the mother-goddesses. There is, as far as I can see, no feeling of an intimate association, and the fact that the clan-deity is not invoked during such personal crises as birth, marriage or death supports this view.

The origin of the cult of clan-deities is somewhat doubtful, and the facts that not all Reddi clans have separate tutelary deities, and that no clan-deities or house-gods exist in the Northern Hills, make one inclined to believe that the introduction of this cult into Reddi religion may be of no great antiquity. Some light may be thrown on the development of this cult by the situation which exists in the twin-settlement of Gogulapudi-Dornalpushe. Here the deity worshipped by the people of Gogulapudi at the main annual feasts is Mutielamma, described to me as the goddess who looks after the village. At the sacrifice of a pig during the Mamidi Panduga men of both settlements were present, and it was only towards the end of my stay that I realized that the men of Gurgunta clan, who live in Dornalpushe, consider Mutielamma rather as the goddess of the people of Gogulapudi, and that at all feasts they perform an additional *puja* for their own god Konda Razu. The Gurgunta people used to live in Pantapalli; there they propitiated Konda Razu at the annual feasts, and indeed the present inhabitants of Pantapalli still worship Konda Razu as their main deity. When the Gurgunta families came from Pantapalli, they brought with them the cult of Konda Razu, but they also began to participate in the worship of Mutielamma as the goddess specially associated with the locality. Gurgunta Lachmaya (House 7, Fig. 84), who died between my first and second visit, performed the *puja* for Konda Razu and was often referred to as *pujari* Lachmaya, although the village *pujari* and *pedda kapu* was Golla Lachmaya of Gogulapudi. One could well imagine that the various clans which gathered in the course of time in the large river-bank villages each brought the cult of their own particular local deity to the new settlement and that in this way local deities assumed the role of clan-deities. This would also explain how it is that two clans often revere the same clan-god, as for instance, the Kopal and Vinel clans in Parantapalli, for if originally both had come from the same locality,

they would in this way bring with them the same deity.

While this may explain the worship of special clan-deities in the jungle at the annual feasts, that cult of tutelary gods worshipped in the house, and often in a special 'god-room,' must be attributed to the influence of neighbouring populations, and this is all the more likely since both the Koyas and many of the lower Telugu castes are accustomed to propitiate certain deities in their houses.

## *Spirits*

One feature of Reddi religion must strike all those familiar with other aboriginals of India as peculiar and surprising: the almost complete absence of the belief in malignant spirits. The idea, so prevalent among many aboriginal tribes, that man is opposed by a host of evil spirits eternally out for his ruin is foreign to the Reddi's mind. These spirits, which in most languages of Aryan origin are described as *bhut* and in Telugu as *dayam*, differ from deities (*deo, devata*) by their essential hostility to man, which sacrifices and the exertions of magicians can avert for the moment, but never transform into a benevolent attitude.

To the Reddi nature does not seem to harbour quite such dangerous forces. True, he knows that the *konda devata* may be enraged by even an unconscious trespass, but he knows too that their wrath may be quickly allayed by the promise of an offering, and that they are in general not unfriendly to man and always prepared to help him, if propitiated in the right manner.

The souls of people who died an evil death may turn into *dayam* or *gali* and are then extremely dangerous to the living until banished to the forest by a magician (cf. p. 143). Besides these there are malevalent but fortunately not very powerful spirits of a non-human origin. The Reddis sometimes speak of Gali[1] and Duli as of two evil spirits who appear in the form of vultures. They have the power of making children ill, but they are impotent to endanger adults. Once every year, usually after the Mamidi Panduga, a chicken is killed for Gali and Duli, and thrown into the jungle. If a *veju* discovers that these two spirits are the cause of a child's illness, he promises to offer them a chicken at the next Mamidi Panduga, and this generally suffices to rid the village of their evil influence. Many Reddis believe that the village-goddesses, though in themselves not entirely benevolent, would protect them from any *dayam* who might visit their village. But in general they give little thought to evil spirits and trust that the faithful performance of the traditional rites and sacrifices will safeguard them against any potential

1. Worshipped on Papi Konda; I have not been able to clarify how it is that the term *gali* is used for beings of such different order as the ghosts of humans as well as nature-deities, perhaps *gali* means just spirit, the immaterialness of a spirit being likened to the wind. The meaning of Duli is doubtful, but Gali means literally wind, and Gali Devudu is the wind-god.

danger from invisible powers.

*Priests and Magicians*

In his relations with the supernatural world the Reddi depends on two intermediaries: the *pujari* or village priest, and the *veju* or magician. The *pujari*, as we have seen, functions at all traditional rites and ceremonies; the deities to be propitiated, the offerings to be made and the prayers to be said are all generally known, and the performance of the rite is a matter of routine. No special intuition or skill is required on the side of the *pujari*, whom descent from the village-founder in the direct line qualifies for the office. Less simple are the tasks that fall to the *veju*. While the *pujari* follows the broad and well trodden path of long established ritual, the *veju* must battle through the wilderness of the supernatural world to discover the cause of disease and threatening disaster and must devise the means of placating the wrath of the malignant deity. The *pujari* acts, so to say, while all is well; his offerings are tendered to gods while their mood is benevolent and his prayers are designed to solicit their favour for the welfare of the community and their protection against dangers not yet arisen. But it is only when misfortune is already rife that the *veju* is called to restore the disturbed relations with supernatural powers, to draw the sick from the jaws of death or to counteract the black magic of an enemy. This power, which the *veju* could not wield unless he himself possessed a thorough knowledge of magical practices, justifies his denomination as 'magician,' and we shall see that certain *veju* also use their knowledge to work black magic on their own account. The Reddis have only the one term *veju* to denote both magicians and wizards, and they see nothing incongruous in the fact that the same man should now work for the benefit of individual or community and now employ that same power in injuring his enemies or those of munificent clients.

The role of the *pujari* or hereditary village-priests as the religious head and representative of the community has already been discussed in the foregoing chapter, and we have seen him at work in the performance of public rites. What we have still to study are his relations with the *veju*, the other intermediary between the Reddi and the gods.

Every village must have a *pujari*, but there may or may not be a *veju* among the members of the community. If the *pujari* dies without an heir, any respectable villager may be appointed as priest; for the performance of the public rites does not call for any particular training or knowledge. The priestship is an office, usually, though not invariably, attained through inheritance; the magicianship is an art, acquired by learning or bestowed by supernatural beings on the eager apprentice. It is an art and a power only within reach of those men and women who are predisposed for it by particular mental qualities. Naturally these qualities may occur in a *pujari* as well as in any other man, and his

frequent performance of cult-acts is bound to favour their development. Nothing debars a *pujari* from learning the practices of the *veju,* and the combination of both functions are therefore a fairly common occurrence.

The knowledge of a certain amount of magic is actually very useful for a *pujari,* for at public rites it can always happen that a person hostile to the village obstructs the proceedings by black magic, which must be neutralized by the appropriate counter-magic. Ventla Pentareddi, the *pujari* of Koinda, told me, for instance, that formerly they used to call a *veju* to assist at the Bhumi Devata Panduga and the Mamidi Panduga, but that now they have given up this practice, since he himself is versed in magic, and is therefore quite able to deal with any interference (cf. p. 256). The majority of village-priests, however, are not familiar with magical practices and if there is a *veju* in the village he generally takes an active part in the performance of the annual ceremonies. Though nominally he functions only as assistant of the *pujari,* much depends on the personality of the two men and in exceptional cases the roles may become almost reversed. There seems to be no jealousy between *pujari* and *veju,* for neither derives any particular profit from the performance of public rites and their functions neither clash nor exclude one another; it is only the 'private practice' of the *veju* that is at all lucrative.

The Reddis of the Northern Hills speak of magicians as *goruvaru,* though in most villages the term *veju* is also known: both terms are said to have the same meaning. To avoid confusion we will use the expression *veju* for all Reddi magicians, including those locally described as *goruvaru.*

No Reddi is born a *veju* and I have never heard that aptitude for *veju's* work can manfest itself in childhood. Many *veju* owe their knowledge to the instruction of their father, but not every son of a famous *veju* has the talent or desire to assimilate his father's teaching. Narpal Viraya (Fig. 58), the *veju* of Kakishnur, has two grown-up sons, neither of whom have learnt his art, and when he dies there will be no *veju* in the village. Golla Lachmaya says that only a small part of his knowledge was imparted to him by his father; it is the goddess Mutielamma who taught him most of what he knows; she appears to him in dreams in the shape of a young and beautiful woman and tells him what to do, which god to propitiate in every individual case, and what animals to sacrifice. A similar story is told by Andel Lachmaya, a *veju* of Tumileru, whose grandfather, but not his father, was also a *veju.* Andel Lachmaya began by worshipping Mutielamma and Kanam Razu until one day he became unconscious for several days; while he was in this state two deities appeared to him in his dreams and spoke to him; it was only then that he acquired the powers of a *veju.*

The co-operation of a deity is apparently indispensable to the process of becoming a *veju,* and it seems that it is not only men who seek the gods, but that on occasions the gods themselves take the initiative. The present *veju* of Boduluru, a man of anything but intelligent appearance, says that once when he went to the jungle two *konda devata* possessed him and taught him to be a *veju*; they looked like Reddis, one like a man, the other like a woman. That was less than two years ago, not long after the death of the former *veju* of Boduluru, and now he can talk to the *konda devata.* First he must fast and sacrifice a chicken, and then the *konda devata* possess him; if he treats a sick person it is a *konda devata* who tells him what medicines to apply and what animals to sacrifice.

All *veju* agree that they receive their inspiration and knowledge from the gods, either while in a state of trance, 'when the god is upon them,' as they express it, or through the medium of dreams. How they succeed in bringing on the trance at will, is difficult to say, but it seems that they have a surprising capacity for falling into and out of trances at short intervals. The trance is not of the deep and severe kind characteristic of shamanistic practices, in which all the muscles of the shaman become rigid and the bodily signs are those of complete unconsciousness. In the case of a *veju* it is often not obvious that he is in a trance, although his expression becomes strained and his voice assumes a strange and unnatural tone. Golla Lachmaya, whom I watched reciting long incantations during the sacrificial rites of the Mamidi Panduga, asserted afterwards that he had acted in a state of unconsciousness and was quite unable to repeat the words he had used. I have no reason to doubt his sincerity on this point, for he was otherwise most communicative about his work as a *veju,* and he even suggested that since his brothers had frequently listened to his incantations they might be in a position to tell me what he had chanted under the influence of the gods.

On that particular occasion Lachmaya was acting in his capacity as a *pujari,* but it seems that only those *pujari* who are also *veju,* know how to intone incantations in that particular manner, while others say only a short prayer, the text of which Lachmaya told me without hesitation.

The specific work of *veju* consists, however, not in reciting hymns at public ceremonies, but in discovering the supernatural causes of misfortunes of all kinds, and particularly in the diagnosis and cure of disease. In this case the procedure is roughly as follows. When called to a patient, he first takes some powdered turmeric or ashes with which he draws several lines on a winnowing fan or a large leaf. He then concentrates intensely on these lines, until under his gaze they seem to assume different shapes. It is probable that this intense concentration

on a limited object helps him to fall into a semi-trance,[1] and it is in this state that he begins an incantation, reciting the names of all known deities and spirits. Gradually while still in a trance, the lines of turmeric become blurred before the *veju's* eyes and, merging into each other, take various shapes; if he can identify them as those of vultures he knows that a *konda devata* or a *dayam* is the cause of the illness; if they look like a child's doll 'as sold in the bazaar,' it is a *devudu,* a deity such as Mutielamma.

Sometimes it is the *veju's* tutelary deity who speaks in his trance, telling him which of the gods or spirits has caused the diseases, and indicating the offerings by which his anger can be appeased.

As soon as the deity or spirit responsible is identified, the *veju* promises to sacrifice a chicken, or in serious cases even a goat or pig, if the patient recovers. Sometimes, however, the *veju* decides that it is best to kill a chicken at once, and this is then thrown into the jungle for the offended deity; in such cases the chicken is not eaten. In ordinary cases when the animal is sacrificed on the patient's recovery, it is usually the *veju* who receives the sacrificial animal.

All *veju* do not employ the same methods to detect the cause of sickness. One *veju* uses turmeric and a winnowing fan, the other turmeric spread on a leaf, and a third will divine with the help of charcoal in a leaf cup. Divination with falling ash has already been described in a different context, but all these devices seem to have only one aim, namely to assist mental concentration and so to induce a trance.

Not always, however, are they successful. During the long illness of Kopal Mangamma of Mautagudem (cf. p. 138), both Golla Lachmaya and the *veju* of Mautagudem as well as several other *veju* tried to cure her, but all to no avail. Lachmaya said that soon after he began work he realized that her illness was not caused by a deity or spirit, or even by black-magic, but that it 'came out of her own body.' The method of diagnosis of the *veju* of Mautagudem is to take some leaves into his own house, hold them in his open palm and sprinkle them with powdered turmeric. In the turmeric he sees the gods forming and reforming 'like clouds in a storm.' Usually he can see from this which god has brought the disease, but in the case of Kopal Gangamma the turmeric had not cleared and although he offered chickens, pigs and goats to the gods if they would allow the woman to recover, the gods had replied that they wanted no sacrifices on account of this woman, and their voices, which had come from far away, were quite distinct.

Natural causes of disease are thus definitely recognized. The assertion that the pain comes out of the patient's own body is a *veju's* diagnosis of a disease for which he cannot discover any supernatural

1. Crystal gazing is only a higher developed form of a widely recognized device for inducing a condition of mental dissociation. Among the Ao Nagas, for instance, the usual method of bringing on the trance state is to gaze into a leaf-cup of rice-beer. Cf. J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, London, 1926, p. 245.

cause. If he is well versed in the knowledge of healing herbs and roots—and most *veju* seem to have a more than average knowledge of medicine—he will try to cure a natural disease with natural remedies, and, needless to say, the patient often recovers.

As a fee for treatment, whether by natural or supernatural methods, a *veju* receives generally a few seers of grain or a few annas in cash, and if ultimately a sacrifice is made in fulfilment of a promise to a deity, he receives the sacrificial animal after the deity has fed on its spiritual essence.

In Anantavaram I was told that the *veju* can foretell the future, and that in prophesizing they use a stone, some *nim* leaves and peacock's feathers. By twisting the peacock's feathers they induce a state of trance in which they converse with Mutielamma and the *konda devata* and thus learn of future events. The counteraction of black magic is an essential part of the *veju's* tasks. For when called to treat a sick person, he often realizes that the illness is due to the machinations of another *veju,* acting either on his own or on the instigation of a client hostile to the patient; and no cure can then be effected, unless the identity of the sorcerer is established and his magic neutralized by counter-magic. Yet all *veju* show a definite reluctance to discuss the details of black magic or even of counter-magic, both of which are only two aspects of the same system; there are probably few *veju,* who will not resort to black magic if the temptation is great enough. But black magic is admittedly anti-social and regarded, if not in the light of a crime, certainly as an undesirable and somewhat disreputable activity.

Nevertheless it is rarely that any action is taken against a man or woman suspected of sorcery, even if the whole community is convinced of his identity and guilt and even if he is attributed with the death of several people. Some Reddis stated quite frankly, that every one would be too afraid of bringing the sorcerer's wrath on his own head to make an open stand against him, and even the *kulam pedda* would not dare to fine a worker of black magic, though he might warn him against future activity. If the villagers were to drive out a sorcerer he might turn his power against them and cause their deaths. But others seemed less awed of these practices and declared that if a *veju* was known to have killed one or two persons by black magic, he would be asked to leave the village. People of a neighbouring village might allow him to settle amongst them, but only if he agreed to submit to a drastic treatment. They would borrow a pair of pincers from a Koya or Kammar blacksmith and extract his front teeth,[1] for without his front teeth he

1. This seems to be a common way of dealing with sorcerers in India. Abbe Dubois describes it as follows: "Woe to any one who is accused of having injured another by his spells. The punishment that is usually inflicted consists in pulling out two front teeth from the upper jaw. When bereft of these two teeth, it is thought the sorcerer will no longer be able to pronounce his diabolic mantrams distinctly. If he mispronounces the words his familiar spirit will be angry, and the misfortune that he is trying to bring down upon some one else will, it is thought, fall on his own head." *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies,* Oxford, 1936, p. 142.

would be unable to pronounce his magical formulæ in the correct manner and the spell of his invocations would be broken. But no Reddi was able to quote an instance when such a practice had been enforced, nor do I think that it often occurs.

Generally *veju* guilty of sorcery remain unmolested. Otherwise it could not be such a common practice to employ *veju* for doing away with an enemy or rival; if, when the victim falls ill, his relatives with the help of another *veju* discover the cause of the illness to be due to the spells of a certain sorcerer, whose identity they can establish, their best plan is to approach the sorcerer and try to outbid his first client. Provided they make it worth his while, and can offer him more than he had been promised by the other party, he will undo his magic and the patient will recover. If the sorcerer is unknown, however, or unwilling to retract his charm, a more powerful *veju* may be found able to render the sorcerer's magic ineffective by counter-magic, but this way is not as sure a method as an agreement with the originator of the magic.

Both magic and counter-magic appear to be largely based on the *veju's* influence over deities and spirits, whom he bends to his will with promises of offerings and sacrifices. A contest between rival *veju* often develops into a struggle for the favour of a particular deity. Probably this is why the Reddis describe black magic as *dayam pani* 'spirit work.'

Though women may become *veju* and there are actually several well-known female *veju* in the Godavari valley, I have never heard of Reddi witches who practise their art in secrecy and exclusively to man's detriment. Just as most of the deities and spirits are neither essentially beneficent nor essentially malevolent, so their human familiars use their power and knowledge both for good and evil; indeed I should say that most *veju* are much more often occupied in combating the evil forces of nature and disease for the benefit of man than in bringing trouble upon him. In this respect the Reddis differ from such tribes as the Baigas, where the function of the magician, who works only for the welfare of man, and that of the malignant sorcerer or witch are strictly separated and eternally opposed to one another.[1]

Mention has been made in a previous section of the public performance of *veju* or *goruvaru* in the Northern Hills. At feasts, and particularly at the Sankranti festival, some of these men are possessed by gods or spirits and dance with wild, flying locks, uttering words in a strange tongue and shouting the names of *konda devata* and other gods. They walk over fire and completely submerge themselves in water, and sometimes beg spectators to hit them with rods, crying out as the rods fall on their shoulders " O what lovely flowers you are throwing at me, go on, go on." All these practices, common enough among Gonds, Kolams and other aboriginal tribes of Middle India, and evidently ex-

2. Cf. Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga*, pp. 370-389.

ercised in a state of trance, are unknown among the *veju* of the Godavari Region, and constitute undoubtedly an element foreign to Reddi culture and mentality. For a *veju* of repute does not require such public demonstrations of his power; his clientèle is assured by the success of his cures and his powers of counteracting black magic.

CHAPTER XI.

# RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING POPULATIONS

IF there was a time when the Reddis lived in complete seclusion, relying for their food, clothing and implements on none but their own resources, it must lie back countless centuries. For ever since they learnt the use of metal implements they must have depended on barter with craftsmen of neighbouring tribes, and these contacts led no doubt to other exchanges long before the pioneers of materially more advanced civilizations began their thrust into the Reddi country. Today all Reddis maintain relations with members of other tribes and castes, whose influence on their material culture and on their social and ritual observances is unmistakable. Many of the ceremonies described in the foregoing chapters are clearly of other than Reddi origin, and numerous are the rites observed alike by the Reddis and their neighbours where it is difficult to distinguish between borrower and lender. But, however questionable the individual links in the chain of cultural interpenetration may be, a knowledge of the social and cultural background formed by neighbouring populations is essential for an understanding of Reddi culture.

In describing the people with whom the Reddi of today stands in social and economic relations, we must differentiate between populations settled permanently and in considerable numbers within or close to his habitat and such outsiders as visit the Reddi country only occasionally for purposes of trade or the exploitation of forests. In this chapter we will consider the first category, while the relations between the Reddis and non-resident merchants will be fully discussed in Chapter XIV.

## *Koyas*

Wherever the Reddis live near open country, be it on the fringe on the plains or in the broad valleys of the foot-hills, they have come in contact with another aboriginal tribe, the Koyas, who surround the Reddis on all sides except the extreme north and vastly surpass them in numbers. According to the Census of 1931 there were 33,638 Koyas in Hyderabad State, 34,058 in Bhadrachalam, 17,426 in Polavaram, 13,014 in Chodavaram, 8,708 in Ellavaram, and 19,854 in Malkanagiri Taluq.[1] Though generally restricted to the foot-hills and adjoining plains, they have in some areas penetrated fairly far into the interior

1. In 1941, 31,094 Koyas were counted in Hyderabad, but comparative figures for the taluqs of the East Godavari District are not available.

of the hills, and in many of the villages on the Godavari banks there is a mixed Reddi-Koya population. Local tradition generally asserts that the Koyas are later immigrants, and there can be little doubt that wherever we find the two tribes existing in symbiosis the Reddis represent the older population.

The Koyas are the southernmost branch of the Gondi speaking races, and though strongly influenced by neighbouring Telugu populations, they show a good many of the typical features of Gond culture. The majority of Koyas have retained their tribal tongue and it is only the Koyas in the western part of Warangal District as well as some groups in Polavaram and Chodavaram who have adopted Telugu to the exclusion of Gondi. But those Koyas with whom the Reddis come most frequently in contact still speak Gondi and use Telugu only when talking to people of other communities.

Very much in contrast to the parochial character of Reddi culture, the social and ritual organization of the Koyas cuts across political and geographical boundaries, linking Koyas of Hyderabad with their clan-centres in distant Bastar and Malkanagiri. Pataris[1] or Patudus, their hereditary bards and chroniclers, keep alive the old traditions and myths, and wandering from village to village prevent a cultural isolation of small groups.[2]

Most of the Koyas in Hyderabad have long taken to plough cultivation and have not even a memory of any other form of tillage. Only in the hilly country of the Godavari Gorges are the Koyas still versed in *podu*-cultivation on hill slopes with axe and digging stick; but even there they are nowadays more given to ploughing and seldom settle in places where flat land for permanent cultivation is not available. This preference for the plough is very apparent in the Rampa Country, where the broad valleys are being peopled by Koyas who clear flat land and use ploughs and bullocks. They have mostly come across the mountains from Malkanagiri, and even today considerable migrations are taking place. But the same process is occurring all over the country and the Koyas represent a dynamic force in contrast to the more conservative Reddis. In Mautagudem, for instance, a hill-village on

1. Their function and status are practically identical to those of the Pataris or Pardhans of the Raj Gonds.

2. A general description of the Koyas of Hyderabad is contained in my essay *Tribal Populations of Hyderabad Yesterday and Today*, published as an Appendix to the Hyderabad Census Report for 1941 (*Census of India*, 1941, Vol. XXIII, Part 1). For information on the Koyas of Bastar State, Madras Presidency and Malkanagiri see W. V. Grigson's book *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (London 1938), pp. 53-57, and the following articles by Rev. John Cain; *The Bhadrachalam Taluq, Godavari District, S. India.* Indian Antiquary, Vol. V. 1876, pp. 357 seq; *The Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli Taluqas*, Indian Antiquary, Vol. VIII, 1879, pp. 33 seq; and pp. 219 seq; Vol. X. 1881, pp. 221 seq; *The Koi, a Southern Tribe of the Gond*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. Vol. XIII, 1881, pp. 410 seq. Shorter references to the Koyas are contained in: *Gazetteer of the East Godavari District*, Madras 1907; *Supplement to the District Gazetteer* (1907) *for Godavari District*, Madras 1935; M. R. Ry. V. N. Seshagiri Rao Avargal, *Notes on the Rampa Agency*, Madras 1931, and E. Gloyer, *Jeypur auf der Ostküste Vorderindiens*. Breklum, 1901, pp. 91-93.

the Hyderabad-Polavaram border, where the Reddis have always cut *podu* and possess neither ploughs not cattle, five Koya families settled six years ago with the permission of the Reddi headman and converted some of the gentle slopes in the bed of the valley into permanent plough-land; though they seem to prosper, no Reddi has as yet followed this example. The situation is interesting, for it suggests that in the past other groups of Reddis may have learnt the use of the plough from immigrant Koya settlers, and it may well be that it was Koyas who first introduced ploughing into the Reddi country.

But while Koyas are as a whole more progressive than Reddis, the economies of the two tribes, at least in this area, are based on almost parallel principles and are complementary only in a few secondary respects. Both produce more or less the same food-stuffs and there is thus little interchange of eatables; some Koyas, however, work as blacksmiths and furnish the Reddis with iron implements, and some Reddis engage in basketry and supply baskets and winnowing fans to Koyas. Occasionally these are direct transactions, a Reddi bartering baskets against a knife or an axe, but the usual medium of exchange is grain. The Reddis in the hills of the south maintain quite a flourishing trade in basket-ware, which they barter to people in the open country, including Koyas, for grain, and such provisions as chillies and tobacco; Koya blacksmiths, on the other hand, are not very numerous, and in all the Godavari villages from Parantapalli up to Katkur there is only one Koya working as a blacksmith; he resides in Sigrumamidi, but often goes and works for a few days in Koinda.

In villages like Koinda, where both Reddis and Koyas live under similar conditions, there is as little interchange of goods as among the households of a homogeneous Reddi village. For among Koyas only a few are blacksmiths and the Reddis of the lowlands are less expert in the manufacture of baskets than those of the hills; indeed it does not seem that in the plains baskets figure at all prominently in the Reddis trading transactions with their Koya fellow-villagers.

In Koinda the two communities occupy two separate but contiguous parts of the village. There are only minor differences in the style of houses and Koyas and Reddis wear the same type of dress except at the time of marriages when some Koyas masquerade with dance-dresses of bison-horns and peacock-feathers.

With so great a similarity in material conditions what are the social relations of the two communities? At first sight it would appear that full equality reigns between Reddis and Koyas, and though this impression is erroneous as far as it concerns their respective status in the caste-system, it is correct in regard to the personal relations between individuals in all but ritual matters, and to the influence exerted by the two communities in the running of the village. The Reddis' higher status in the caste system, though freely admitted by Koyas, is mainly

theoretical and seems to be due to the Reddis' compliance with the Hindu prejudice against the eating of beef, and the Koyas' reluctance to desist from sacrificing bulls at their funeral feasts and from enjoying their flesh.[1] Consequently no Reddi may eat of the food cooked by a Koya, and Koyas are not allowed to enter the inner room of Reddi houses; but they may sit in the veranda or under the eaves of the houses. Reddis have, however, no prejudice against entering a Koya house.

From the Reddis' point of view, marriage between members of the two tribes is not permissible, and they expel any man or woman openly consorting with a Koya from their tribal community (cf. 156). The Koyas, on the other hand, say that they accept Reddi women into their community; for by cooking for her Koya husband and living in his house a Reddi woman would infringe none of their tribal laws; nor, if a Reddi chooses to live with a Koya girl, would the Koya community raise any objection.

But marriage with a Koya is not the only way in which Reddi may be absorbed into the Koya tribe. Offenders against tribal law are known to have gone and lived in pure Koya villages and to have become to all intents and purposes Koyas. Thus Potamma, the father's brother's daughter of Gurgunta Chinnaya (Dornalpushe House 5, Genealogy II) was married to Chandel Viraya, whom Chinnaya described as a useless, lazy fellow. They lived in Siddharam and one day went to the Koya village of Kantlum, where a feast was being celebrated. The Koyas invited Viraya and his wife to join them in drinking palm-wine, and when they had thoroughly enjoyed themselves, they took part in the feast and ate of food cooked by Koyas. Such happenings could, of course, not remain hidden, and the Koyas persuaded the couple to avoid the unpleasant consequence of this break of caste rules by staying in Kantlum and helping them with their field-work. Chandel Viraya saw no chance of finding the money for a purification feast to atone for his offence and so he followed the suggestion and built a house in Kantlum. He and his wife now live in Koya style, have learnt the Koya language and I was told that their children are already considered as ordinary members of the Koya community. Their Reddi relations do not like to talk about the affair and disclaim any social contact with the renegades.

In villages where Reddis and Koyas live side by side in fairly equal numbers, each community recognizes its own headman and often also its own *pujari*, but where the members of either tribe predominate, their headman represents the whole village. The relations between the two communities are, as far as I can judge, fairly cordial, and I have never heard of Reddis resenting the presence of Koya settlers, although they

1. Though not definitely considered outcastes, the Koyas are in some areas in danger of being burdened with many of the social disabilities of a depressed class. Under the pressure of Hindu opinion some groups of Koyas have therefore given up beef-eating or at least pretend to have done so.

seldom fail to emphasize that they are the original owners of the land. Yet there exists little genuine community spirit between the co-villagers of different tribes. For ties of blood or marriage, the life-blood of Reddi social cohesion, have no place in intertribal relationships.

Does such a mixed village ever function as a single unit in ceremonial matters? Where Koyas have settled among Reddis in comparatively small numbers and in recent times, they have frequently no *pujari* of their own and take a more or less passive part in the ritual observances of the Reddis. Thus in Mautagudem the five Koya families join the Reddis in all their public rites and ceremonies, whose organization is however completely in Reddi hands. The Reddi *pujari* sacrifices all animals, even those provided by the Koyas, and all food is cooked by Reddis and then divided between the two communities, who dine separately; but at the great festivals members of both tribes mingle in the subsequent dance. The only rites that the Koyas of Mautagudem observe independently of Reddis are the sacrifices and offerings performed in their own houses.

In Koinda the great annual agricultural feasts are celebrated by Reddis in conjunction with Koyas; the Koyas, however, are not, as in Mautagudem, passive spectators, but have their own *pujari*, who simultaneously with the Reddis sacrifices animals and invokes the gods on behalf of his own community. Koyas prepare the food for their community at a small distance from the Reddis and the members of each tribe sit down to a separate meal; but here again both tribes dance together. At such ceremonies as the first eating of the new jawari-millet (cf. p. 195), however, the offerings of the Reddi *pujari* suffice to lift the taboo on the eating of grain for the whole village.

Where Reddis and Koyas join in the celebration of the feasts, it is not always a Reddi who acts as *pujari*. In Kasaram, for instance, a Koya functions as village priest and in Siddharam the office of *pujari*, which hereditarily belongs to the Reddi Boli Kanaya, passed to a Koya when Kanaya emigrated to the hills.

It seems that in villages where both tribes are approximately of equal numerical strength and where the Koyas have been settled for some generations, there is a tendency for each tribe to observe its own great annual feasts. Thus we find the Reddis and Koyas of Kondamodalu both celebrating the Mamidi Panduga and the Bhumi Devata Panduga, which are purely aboriginal feasts not observed by other castes, but holding their festivities on different days and conducting the rites at different sacred places. But in propitiating Pansalamma or Ammavaru, a Hindu village deity revered by many lower castes, Reddis, Koyas and Kammars come together at the goddesses' ' altar ' and make joint offerings to avert her malignant influence.

Since neither marriage nor kinship-ties exist between Reddis and Koyas, all domestic ceremonies such as marriages or funerals are, even

in mixed villages, essentially the concern of the affected community; but this does not preclude fellow-villagers of the other tribe from occasionally participating in such festivities. Here Koyas are at a material advantage, they may eat of food cooked by Reddis, and many Reddis invite Koya friends to their wedding feasts, whereas Reddis even when invited, can do little more than look on, for they may not eat of food prepared by Koyas. At big Reddi weddings Koyas attend not only as guests but also as musicians; they play drums as well as wind-instruments and assuming the same rôle as the Madiga drummers, expect not only to be fed but also to be paid for their services.

Where both tribes live in one village, attendance at each other's funerals is not uncommon, and, as a last friendly gesture to the deceased, I have seen Koya women helping to bring pots of water with which to wash a Reddi corpse.

On the whole the economic and social relations between Reddis and Koyas are exactly those which we should expect to find between two tribes of approximately equal standing: even though the Koya is more progressive and the Reddi claims higher social status, their cultural heritages have so much in common that the barriers of caste which today fall betwixt them seems but an artificial division springing from the adoption of Hindu ideas.

## *Kammars*

In many villages of the Godavari Region live a few families of Kammars, aboriginal blacksmiths not to be confused with the occupational caste of Telugu blacksmiths known by the same name.

For in racial type, appearance and general culture they show close affinities with the Reddis, and there can to my mind be no doubt that they are a purely aboriginal population. Though generally well-versed in iron-work they are not a professional caste in the proper sense of the word; not all members of the Kammar community work at the forge and many are occupied solely in agriculture. The only village almost entirely composed of Kammars which I found in this area is Kachchuluru on the left Godavari bank some six miles downstream from Kondamodalu. One generation ago there were also Reddis in Kachchuluru, but they immigrated and two merchant-families have since settled in the village. Among the twenty-one Kammar householders only one follows the blacksmith's vocation, while all the others cut *podu* on hill-slopes. They cultivate like the Reddis with digging-sticks, broadcast *sama,* and dibble jawari, pulses and chillies. They have no flat fields and do not use ploughs. Their only domestic animals are pigs, chickens and dogs. The man working as blacksmith provides iron implements to all his fellow-villagers as well as to a fairly large clientèle of Reddis from several neighbouring villages. All his regular customers pay him a yearly fee of 24 seers of grain per family and in excange he

executes any number of orders from the iron which they supply; but he charges occasional clients small quantities of grain or cash for each individual implement.

In Teliberu four households of Kammars live beside twenty-five Reddi households, and here again only one of them is engaged in the blacksmith's trade, while the others subsist by cultivation on *podu*-fields. Kammars, Reddis and Koyas have for a long time been living side by side in the large village of Kondamodalu, and here two out of the nine Kammars work at the forge. However, both have *podu*-fields of their own, and although they make plough-shares for other castes, no Kammar in any of these villages is occupied in plough-cultivation. One of the two blacksmiths told me that he worked permanently for eleven Reddi and Koya households, whose yearly fees amounted to 264 seers of grain, but he supplements his earnings by occasional work for other people.

The arrangement by which a blacksmith, whether Koya or Kammar, receives a fixed amount of grain yearly from his regular clients and in return executes all their orders, however numerous or however few, is a general custom throughout the Reddi country. It must be noted however that in this area neither Kammar nor Koya smiths mine or smelt iron, but fashion articles from metal procured in bazaars or from traders.

The social status of the Kammars is low, they are looked down upon by both Reddis and Koyas, and Kammar houses whether in groups or singly are always situated on the outskirts of Reddi and Koya settlements. Their habit of eating beef explains the Reddis' attitude, but it is hard to discover the cause of the Koyas' feeling of superiority. Intermarriage between Reddis and Kammars is out of the question, and the suggestion of extra-marital sex relations raises louder protestations than a similar association with Koyas. In other respects, however, the Reddis do not look on the Kammars as such outsiders as the Malas and Madigas, and this is probably due to their age-old connection as well as to the Kammars' engagement in the same type of agriculture and their observance of the same great annual feasts. In mixed villages such as Teliberu the Kammars attend all the Reddi festivals, but eat separately and do not provide animals for sacrifice; in pure Kammar villages they have their own *pujari* and celebrate festivals like the Mamidi Panduga and Bhumi Devata Panduga with rites similar to those of Reddis and Koyas, sacrificing pigs and chickens for Bhumi Devata, Mutielamma, and the *konda devata*. Unlike Reddis they perform an additional ceremony before cutting a new *podu* field and at this time they sacrifice a goat to the *konda devata*.

Both in regard to their economy, with the predominant rôle played by *podu*-cultivation, and to the character of their religious rites and ceremonies, the Kammars of the Godavari Region can be counted

among the races within the aboriginal complex of this area. Their present dispersal into small groups and the fact that they have certain characteristics of a professional caste, must not lead us to overlook their close affinity with the Reddis in the fundamental traits of their culture.

### *Malas.*

Besides the aboriginal tribes of Koyas and Kammars several Telugu castes share today the Reddis' habitat and in some places even their village sites. But while members of higher castes come usually as traders, settling perhaps for a few years in a village on the Godavari bank, but rarely severing the ties with their old home in the open country below the gorge, several of the lowest castes of Telugu society have gained a permanent foothold in parts of the Reddi country. Most numerous among these despised but tenacious forerunners of Telugu civilization are the Malas, one of the main pariah castes of the Andhra country.

In rural districts the Malas subsist mainly by cultivation and agricultural labour; they are essentially a lowland people and their economy is complimentary to that of the higher Hindu castes. In the Godavari Region the contact with Malas is of little consequence for the Reddis. There are only a few villages, such as Katkur, where Malas, following in the train of Hindu merchants, have settled in any number. A few Malas possess their own fields, but the majority are employed by the merchants as servants and as labourers for work on flat fields acquired from aboriginals; but they never cut *podu* or cultivate on hill-slopes. Following the example of caste Hindus the Reddis regard the Malas as standing at the very bottom of the social scale; while a Reddi will enter a Koya house, he considers himself defiled if he sets foot in the house of a Mala, and Malas are not even allowed on the verandas of Reddi houses.

Reddis from the hill-villages occasionally barter baskets and winnowing fans to Malas, receiving grain, chillies and tobacco in payment, but otherwise there is, in this area, little economic exchange between the two castes. There are, however, two ceremonial services which the Malas render to the more sophisticated Reddis of the Godavari villages; they play flutes and other wind-instruments at weddings, and where both castes live in one village, as in Katkur, a Mala lights the pyre at Reddi funerals.[1] For both services the Malas are rewarded by small cash-payments.

In the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills the relations between Reddis and Malas are of a fundamentally different order. Since the pacification of the country after the Rampa rebellion, Malas have swarmed into the Reddi Hills. They have come in as independent petty

1. The same services are rendered by the Malas to certain Hindu castes.

traders from the lowlands of East Godavari and Vizagapatam Districts and their numbers are yearly increasing; in such *mutta* as Boduluru they constitute today almost half the population. As settlers in the hills they are sometimes described as Konda Malas or Konda Telegas, but they like to style themselves Valmiki.[1] Many have been converted to Christianity and have received education in mission schools, and those who retain the old faith are attempting to raise their social status in the eyes of the Hindus by abstaining from the flesh of the cow. As a whole these Malas are more progressive than the ordinary Mala cultivators of the plains; their main occupation is trade, but some of them are also engaged in plough cultivation and horticulture.

The bulk of the Mala population of the Northern Hills has settled in villages that are either surrounded by flat cultivable land or are convenient centres of trade. The village of Gurtedu in the broad valley of the Gumme Revu, for instance, consists today almost entirely of Malas, while the Reddis live in hamlets at the foot of the surrounding hills; in Pullangi, which lies on the trade route between Chodavaram and Malkanagiri, there are sixty Mala and only thirty Reddi houses, while in Sevarikota there are sixteen Mala and ten Reddi houses. In other villages, however, the Malas are still in a minority. Thus there are only eight Mala households in Patakota, all of whom immigrated one generation ago from Dharakonda, a large village to the east in Vizagapatam District. Four of them engage in cultivation besides carrying on petty trade, while the other four subsist solely on trading.

The trading principles of these Malas are very different from those of lowland merchants who display their goods in shop or market; they are itinerant traders and spend many months of the year in touring the interior of the hills. They transport their merchandize by pack-bullocks, bringing goods of plains manufacture and such commodities as salt to the aboriginal's door and carrying away in exchange agricultural and forest produce. Among the sources of their prosperity are the trading expeditions to the plains of Malkanagiri; there rice is plentiful and means of transport are few, there they buy rice cheaply after the harvest, and loading it on to their troops of pack bullocks, bring it across the Sileru and the high mountain passes of the Eastern Ghats.

The products that Malas buy from the Reddis in the hills include castor seed, soap-nuts, tamarind, turmeric, and occasionally also grain; the rates which govern these transactions amply reward them for their wandering life. Castor-seed for instance they purchased in 1941 at a rate of 30 seers per Re. 1 and sold it in the bazaars of the plains at a rate of 8 seers per Re. 1. The trade in grain is of less importance, for

1. The term Valmiki is derived from Valmiki the author of the Ramayana, whom the Malas claim as a member of their caste. The objection of the educated members of the caste and particularly those converted to Christianity, against the name Mala is understandable, since the word *mala* is frequently used to denote anything defiling; *malakudu*, for instance, means 'polluted food' and also defilement' in general.

few Reddis raise sufficient crops to produce a surplus, but if in need of money they will occasionally sell small quantities of *sama* or *tsollu*. While at the time of my visit the usual market rate for these small millets was 16 seers per Re. 1, the Malas purchased it from the Reddis at half the price, demanding 32 to 34 seers per Re. 1. The Mala traders often pays cash, but with the nearest market two and sometimes three days journey away many Reddis in the remoter villages find it more convenient to conduct their transactions on a barter basis, although they realize that the prices in the bazaars are lower. After a bad harvest or when collecting provisions for a wedding a Reddi is sometimes induced to take grain on credit from a Mala trader, but he must repay double the quantity the next year or mortgage his output of castor and jungle produce for years to come.

Many Malas combine money-lending with their ordinary trade, and the interest they charge is hardly less exorbitant than that of money-lenders in the plains. So deeply ingrained is the business spirit in the Malas of that part of the country, that Mala school teachers are becoming a power in the land by using their salaries to lend out money to Reddis. The Reddis of villages such as Patakota, who have recently taken to plough-cultivation, but do not possess sufficient cattle, moreover hire bullocks from Malas. While I was in Patakota a Mala arrived with his pack-bullocks to collect his dues from the *munsif* of the village, to whom he had lent one pair of bullocks for the ploughing of rice-fields; he received 360 seers of unhusked rice, out of a total harvest of 1,200 seers.

The Hill Malas have a definite prejudice against all manual labour, and a talent for palming off anything that entails such work on others. They rather pride themselves on this disposition and frequently refer to their own sharp wit which enables them to make a comfortable living by their flair for business and trade. Whenever possible they employ Reddis to work for them, paying in cash or kind for services rendered. Those Malas who do not possess pack-animals, for instance, often get their loads carried by Reddi coolies, whom they feed and pay Re. 1 per month; while those Malas of Gurtedu who have fields of their own use Reddi labour for cultivation. In 1941 the usual daily wage was As. 2 but if the employer provided food, he paid the labourers only As. 1. Some Malas of Gurtedu raise grain on *podu*-fields, but since they are not accustomed to this strenuous method of cultivation, they hire Reddis to do the work. It would be difficult to understand why any Reddis should cut *podu* on his own village-land for outsiders instead of for himself, unless it is that the Malas have established so strong a grip on the aboriginals that they are in a position to command. House-building is another task for which the Malas prefer to employ Reddis, and the Malas of Boduluru told me that they paid Reddis Rs. 4 to Rs. 10 for a complete house.

The Reddis, on the other hand, hire Malas to play drums at large weddings, paying them as much as Rs. 2 a time, and most Reddi *muttadar* have Mala clerks to keep their accounts, and help them in the registration of their taxes.

The most serious effect of the establishment of Malas in the Northern Hills is their appropriation of many of the Reddis' fruit-groves. These groves of oranges and limes constitute here one of the most valuable assets of the Reddis, for oranges find ready buyers among the merchants from Rajahmundry and the value of one year's harvest amounts to thousands of rupees. The Malas were quick to seize such an opportunity, and by various methods, chiefly by lending out money to the unsuspecting Reddis, gradually came into possession of a great many of these gardens or gained their usufruct by attaching them as securities. We shall see in Chapter XIII (p. 289) that the Agency Land and Interest Transfer Act of 1917 does not prevent such practices; for the Hill Malas of the Agency are scheduled as aboriginals.

Though economically outpacing the Reddis, often literate and generally maintaining a higher standard of life, the Malas of the Northern Hills and the Rampa Country have not as yet been able to overcome the social disabilities resulting from caste-rules. A Reddi may work for a Mala, but he will always consider himself of vastly superior social status and would never give his employer access to his house or share in his meals; and in this respect he recognizes no difference between a Christian and a non-Christian Mala. The two castes do not intermarry, and I was told that although a few Reddi girls have gone to live with Malas, and were promptly expelled from their own community, no Reddi man has been known to take a Mala girl into his house. I believe that illicit sex-relations between Reddi women and Malas must be fairly frequent, for some Reddis in villages on the main trade-route bear in features and build a marked resemblance to Malas, which can hardly be explained in any other way.

Those Malas who have been converted to Christianity—and there are villages where practically all Malas are Christians—take no interest in Reddi ceremonies and feasts. Where the Malas have retained their old faith, however, they participate in certain Reddi feasts. In Patakota, for instance, both communities observe the Gangamma Devi Panduga and though the rites are conducted by the Reddi *pujari*, and only Reddis provide sacrificial animals, the Malas attend at a respectful distance; when the Gangamma Devi Pot is carried from house to house it is also taken to Mala houses for offerings of grain, but the Malas in tendering their contributions are careful not to approach too close to the sacred pot. When all rites are concluded and the food that has been collected is cooked, the Malas share the feast, but sit down to dine in a separate group at some distance from Reddis.

A more active part in Reddi ritual is taken by Malas during those

Reddi weddings that are celebrated in the new and pretentious style. A Mala versed in divination indicates the auspicious day for the wedding and the auspicious time for the tying of the *pustie* and then, while the barber cleans the nails of the bridal couple preparatory to the final rite, the same Mala reads what is supposed to be a sacred text from a Telugu book. Reddis lack otherwise any concern about auspicious or inauspicious times, and the ministering of the Mala, for which he is paid between Rs. 2 and 3, is evidently a recent innovation in the marriage ritual and illustrates the practical use to which even a little learning may be put.

Another significant light is thrown on the development of Reddi-Mala relationship by a statement of the people of Patakota. There I was told that if the Malas quarrel they settle their dispute among themselves, but when the Reddis hold a *panchayat* they call Malas to help them discuss the case and to tender their advice. Though this may not yet be a general practice, it is symptomatic of the power which his quick wit and the gift "to speak well" lends the Mala over his simpler neighbours.

The difference in character between the two communities receives further emphasis by the education which large numbers of Malas receive in schools run by both Government and the Dummagudem Anglican Mission. These schools are open to all village-children, but the Reddis have as yet not realized the advantages of education, and assert with a certain amount of logic that what is useful to the Mala in his trading activities is of little help to them in their work on the *podu*-field. This attitude is not unalterable, however, and schools for Reddis in the Godavari Valley, partly with Reddi teachers, have proved fairly successful. The fact that in the Northern Hills all school masters are Malas, who have perhaps difficulties in understanding the mentality of aboriginal children, may explain the Reddis' lack of interest in school-education.

At first sight one may be tempted to regard the different economic systems of Reddi and Mala as complementary and their trade relations as to their mutual benefit. In reality, however, it is mainly the Mala who profits, while the Reddi has to pay heavily for the convenience of having bazaar goods brought into his village and for the facility of disposing of his produce without a long trek to a distant market. Particularly those Reddis who live in constant touch with Malas seem to be badly exploited and have already lost most of their valuable fruit-gardens to the immigrant traders.[1] Rather improvident in matters concerning money, the Reddi easily falls victim to the clever devices of Mala

1. M. R. Ry. N. V. Seshagiri Rao Avargal writes of the Konda Malas: "Almost all the fruit gardens in the north of Chodavaram Division have passed into their hands, for the brainy Mala finds an easy prey in the unsophisticated hillman. They are generally hated by the other classes for their usury and extortion." *Notes on the Rampa Agency, East Godavari District*, Madras, 1931.

money-lenders, and once in their net he has little chance of ever regaining his economic independence.

### *Madigas, Mangals and Tsakals.*

Every larger Telugu village contains members of the Madiga, Mangal and Tsakal castes, who are commonly known as "village-servants" and generally hold rent-free land to reward them for their public services. The Madiga acts as watchman and messenger, the Mangal as barber and the Tsakal as washerman. Owing to the strict division of labour between the occupational castes no one else may serve as barber and washerman and thus the higher castes and particularly the minor Government officials, such as policemen and foresters, have a keen interest in retaining at least one household of each of these castes in villages where they have to reside or to camp.

In purely aboriginal villages there is, of course, no need for Madiga, Mangal or Tsakal, but wherever outsiders have settled in any number there are generally also members of these three castes to be found, and it is in these villages that the Reddis come in touch with them. In Katkur on the Hyderabad side of the Godavari, for instance, there are a number of Madiga households and one Tsakal; another Tsakal lives in Koinda and a Mangal in Tekpalli.

The Madigas are the great leather-working caste of the Telugu country and their handling of the carcasses of cows causes them to be despised by all other castes including the beef-eating Malas. Yet in the Reddi country they cannot be called downtrodden and their function as village watchmen lends them a certain power which seems ill-matched with their low social status. As watchmen and messenger the Madiga is in attendance on all those in authority, acting as executive agency for anybody entitled or willing to employ him. The policeman will not escort a captured criminal personally to the police station, but entrusts him to a Madiga guard, and the *patwari* or *patel* who wants to summon the defaulting revenue-payer sends Madigas to his house to fetch him or to seize his cattle as security. When provisions are required for a touring officer, it is the Madiga watchmen who are ordered to collect chickens, eggs and other eatables from the neighbouring villages, and on such foraging expeditions they will seldom fail to look after their own larder. But it is not only the Government officials whom the Madiga serves; every wealthy merchant has a few Madigas in his suit, and if a Reddi or Koya is unable or unwilling to pay a debt, or if he incurs the displeasure of the merchant, the latter will send his Madigas to threaten him or order them to carry off cattle, goats or any other movable property which they may be able to seize. Needless to say, the Madigas are not exactly popular among the Reddis, and the appearance of a village-watchman in an out-of-the-way hill-settlement evokes general apprehension for the safety of chickens and goats.

In the larger and less remote villages of the Godavari Region the Reddis have adopted the Telugu custom of calling Madigas as drummers for weddings as well as for the celebration of the triennial *puja* for Mutielamma. A band of four Madiga drummers receives for this service about Re. 1 to Rs. 2 plus food, and if several weddings are held at a time, each bridegroom has to pay Re. 1. The Reddis of Kakishnur told me that if they did not call the Madigas from Koinda, the latter on hearing of the wedding would come to the village, and demand what they considered their due. If it were refused they would upset the whole wedding by the violence of their complaints and abuses. A Reddi seldom risks a quarrel with a Madiga, for if he worsts him the Madiga, through his association with policemen, *patwari* and merchants, finds ample opportunity for retaliation, and if the Reddi is beaten by the Madiga, he must purify himself of the defilement and disgrace of receiving blows from a pariah by paying a fine of Rs. 2 or 3 to his co-villagers.

Both Mangals and Tsakals also function at weddings celebrated with full rites, and we have already seen that the Mangal (barber) conducts the ceremony immediately preceding the tying of the *pustie* and cleans the nails of the bridal couple with special instruments, while the Tsakal (washerman) acts as torch bearer and as master of ceremonies. Their fees vary according to the affluence of the bridegroom, but they will seldom receive less than Re. 1 and several seers of rice apiece, and in addition extract at various stages of the ceremonies small sums from the weddings guests, holding up the whole proceedings if the money is not forthcoming.

The presence of a Mangal at a wedding is evidently considered more important than that of a Tsakal, and many Reddis dispense with the assistance of a Tsakal either for reasons of economy or because no Tsakal lives in the neighbourhood.

Although Mangalas and Tsakals are caste-Hindus and are consequently allowed to enter Reddi houses, the Reddis consider themselves of higher social status than either and excommunicate any member of their tribe who has sexual relations with a person of barber or washerman caste. In practice, however, such inter-caste unions do occur; a son of the barber of Tekpalli lives in what is to all intents and purposes marriage with a Reddi girl, and a Tsakal of Katkur eloped recently with the young wife of the Reddi headman Kechel Lachmaya to a village on the other river-bank. Since the abductor was of different caste, the Reddis were powerless to punish or fine him and there was thus no redress for the aggrieved husband.

A remarkable example of the influence of aboriginal culture on non-aboriginals is afforded by the Mangal of Tekpalli, who has taken to *podu*-cultivation and works a hill-field, growing jawari and *sama* in exactly the same fashion as the Reddis. His daughter lives with one of

the Reddis of the village, and it seems indeed that the whole family has to a large extent been absorbed into the aboriginal sphere.

### *Jangams*

The association of Reddis with Jangams is confined to the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills, and we have already learnt that it is mainly *muttadar* who have Jangam *guru* and employ them for the performance of various ceremonies. The Reddis of the Palal clan are said to have brought the Jangams in their train when they first penetrated into the Reddi country, but it seems more probable that the contact is of much more recent date, for except Pulikanta Sambaya, the Jangam *muttadar* of Kutturvada and his relations, all other Jangams acting as *guru* of Reddi *muttadar* live on the fringe of the Reddi country, mainly in Ellavaram.

The Jangams are Lingayats, *i.e.*, members of a sect of Shiva worshippers, and such customs of certain *muttadar* as the burying of their dead in a sitting posture seem to be due to their influence. Occasions on which the presence of a Jangam is considered necessary by most *muttadar*, and desirable by many other Reddis are weddings and funerals. At the former the Jangam functions either in conjunction with or in place of a Mangal, but it is always the Jangam who conducts the ceremony, shows the *pustie* to the assembled guests and points out *arundatta*[1] to the bridal couple. The services of a Jangam are no more expensive than those of a barber and his attendance for whatever purpose may be secured for Re. 1 plus provisions for his journey. A *muttadar* however, will pay the Jangam more handsomely in proportion to his means.

While the employment of Jangams at weddings and funerals is still more or less the prerogative of the prominent and wealthy, it is obligatory at all purification ceremonies. If a Reddi, excommunicated for a caste-offence, is to gain re-admittance into the community by giving a feast, he must summon a Jangam, who will burn his tongue with a piece of heated gold to purge him of his sin.

Socially Jangams and Reddis consider each other of approximately equal status. Jangams will dine with Reddis and some of them will eat chicken and goat, but none partake of pork or any kind of game. The Jangams look on pig as an unclean animal and it is very noticeable that those Reddis who live in contact with Jangams neither keep nor eat pigs.

Marriages with full rites may not be concluded between Jangams and Reddis, but informal unions are of frequent occurrence.

In Kuttravada both Reddis and Jangams live in approximately equal style and both seem prosperous communities. Here the Jangams have

1. A small star called after the faithful wife of Vashishtha ; the Reddis neither know the name of the star, nor why the Jangam shows it to the bridal couple.

even adopted the practice of *podu*-cultivation and say that they learnt it from the Reddis. All feasts, including the Mamidi and Bhumi Devata Panduga, are celebrated by both castes together and the Jangam *muttadar* performs the sacrificial rites. There is no opportunity for friction, and the relations between Reddis and Jangams appear to be entirely amicable. Other Jangams, however, who serve the Reddis further north are not so embroiled in Reddi life; they live in Gudem or villages near-by, and only visit the Reddi country when their presence is required for celebrations.

## CHAPTER XII.

# THE INTERPENETRATION OF CULTURES IN ACTION.

IN the preceding chapter we have learnt that the Reddi of today entertains social as well as economic relations with a number of other populations and that he frequently shares a single village site and the surrounding cultivable land both with the aboriginal Koyas and Kammars and recent immigrants from the lowlands. This contact exerts far-reaching influences on material conditions and general culture, but though we have had occasion to discuss many of the recent developments in the Reddi's economics, social organization and ritual, we have not yet been able to visualize the actual blending of cultures and the atmosphere in those Reddi villages where the interaction of many forces has created a new and more complex pattern of life. The following pages are therefore devoted to the description of three scenes typical of the Godavari Reddis' public life.

### *An Agricultural Rite*

The small millets on the hills ringing the wide expanse of level cultivated land behind the village of Koinda have long been reaped; even the rice fields lie denuded but for stubble, and the crop is stacked near the threshing floors where bullocks tread out the grain and men and women standing to leeward of the light breeze winnow the new grain from fans held high above their heads. Only the great millet still stands on the fields, heads bowed, golden and heavy with grain, and here and there a man perched on a lofty bamboo platform keeps an untiring vigil amidst the ripening crop, now scaring a swarm of sparrows with loud shouts now directing a shower of stones towards a threatened corner of his field.

It is the middle of December and the shadows of the tall palmyra palms, sharply pencilled against a transparent sky, lengthen as a light breeze rustles softly in their fan-shaped leaves and dispels the heat of a long sunny day. Suddenly the thud of hoofs on the hard, parched earth breaks the peace as, enveloped in a cloud of dust, the cattle heads for the river after the day's grazing in the forest. Wide-horned buffaloes, creamy cows, and black and white goats jostle each other on the narrow path between two fenced-in fields, while small naked boys, bow in hand, brown bodies daubed with reddish dust, encourage the herd with blows and shouts. Today they are hurrying to water the cattle; the buffaloes are allowed less time to wallow in the shallows and soon the boys are

driving the animals up the steep bank to the village; for this evening the first eating ceremony for the new millet (*kottalu kalapatam*[1]) is to be performed, and the boys are eager not to miss the excitement.

The preparations for the ceremony have just begun. Outside the village, under a wide-spreading tamarind tree stands a small wooden post, roughly carved in phallic shape and it is here, close to the place sacred to Mutielamma that a few Reddi women and girls have gathered. They are busy washing the phallic post, pouring water over it and rubbing it with their hands. The oldest smears the wood with yellow turmeric paste and finally, unpacking leaf parcels of red *bottu* powder and white, finely ground rice flour, she decorates the post with red and white dots.

Close by two men are clearing a small patch of ground on which they trace out a checked rectangular design with rice flour, ornamented with blobs of magenta powder.

As the sun sets people come from the village and among them is Ventla Pentaya the village priest, a small middle-aged man with a sprouting moustache, a fresh *bottu* mark on his forehead, a white turban, and a greyish cloth wrapped round his shoulders. He and his brother Potreddi head a file of men, women and children who thread a narrow path through one of the millet fields, brushing aside the hard towering stalks as they pass; at last they emerge at an open place on the river bank where in the shade of a high tamarind tree lies a large, flat stone-slab bearing the age-worn relief of a deity with a trident; nearby the corner of another stone protrudes from the earth. Centuries ago Hindu traders, shipping their wares from the East and the Delta up the Godavari, whence they were transported by cart and carrier to the Kakatiya Kings at Warangal and Palampet, may have camped on this site and it may have been they who set up graven images of the gods whose protection they invoked on their journeyings. Though meaning and identity of the stone images has long been forgotten, the place still retains its sacred association and the Reddi priest covers the image with coarsely milled new millet and marks the other stone with red and white dots. His brother places besides each stone a leaf-cup with smouldering incense.

The scene for the rite is now set. Pentaya is handed a coconut, hacks it open with a curved knife and allows the milk to flow over the stones. A young assistant in loin-cloth and white shirt produces a small white chicken and Pentaya plucks a feather from its wing and places it beside the millet; the chicken's feet are washed with water and its head smeared with turmeric. The priest then discards his turban and we see that his grey hair is cut short except for a tuft on the crown. Having bared his head he is prepared to invoke the gods, and he strews a few grains of millet in front of the stone and sets the chicken down to

1. Literally "mixing of new things."

peck. But the chicken is too frightened to care for food and the priest, holding it in his hand, soothes it by stroking its feathers. Squatting before the stone he begins a long incantation to the gods, breathing heavily between each phrase as if under a terrific strain. "Today we come to worship you, however far you may wander in unknown lands, wherever you may have strayed like pilgrims to a distant place, come to us now; we have fasted and now we are mixing the new crops for this feast. Oh you on a seat of gold and silver, protect us, oh god."[1]

Again the chicken is put to the rice eating test, but it remains obdurate and the priest hands it to his brother Potreddi, who raises it to his forehead and bowing presents it to the east, the south and the west (Fig. 64). Meanwhile Pentaya begins to address the gods in an urgent and imploring tone: "Oh mother, Parvati, oh Parmeshvara, we greet you, why do you delay and fill us with sorrow? Deity of the Papi Hill, Mutielamma of Rekapalli, King of the village boundary, come here, all those who hear and see, come to us, we greet thee. Oh, my mothers, my fathers, my ancestors, oh Potraj, oh deity of the Papi Hill, great will be our joy at your coming. Oh god, do not be angry with us, do not tarry. We greet thee, we do not lie, we do not speak that which is not true. Oh Mutielamma of Madi Hill, oh Rokelamma of Rollagandi, Potrazu of Pantapalli, oh Mavili of Pantapalli, we obey you, oh hear us.[2]

Yet even this is of no avail and a brown chicken, which Pentaya put to the same test does not pick up a single grain. The priests and all those present are filled with fear lest the offerings are not acceptable to the gods. Why do they withhold their favour? Only black magic can be the cause, and suspicion falls on the Koya magician of Koinda, Soyam Kanaru, who, it is whispered, has obstructed the path of the gods by his evil spells. His name is not spoken aloud, but Potreddi begins a long harangue against the perpetrators of the magic, calling them by many evil names.

At last the white chicken pecks at the millet, but since no manner of persuasion can induce the brown one to swallow even a single grain, both chickens are taken back to Mutielamma's tree and there the *pujari* arranges some tempting offerings of sweetened millet balls, lumps of cooked millet, uncooked grain, sprigs of chilli, a few beans and sugar in little leaf-cups in front of the rice flour design. Standing before these offerings, he clasps the chickens to his breast and calls on the goddesses once more: "Why is its mouth shut? Oh, my mother, don't fear,

1. The above is a free translation, made with the help of Pentaya's later explanations. The actual text runs:

*I rozu memu vedu kondu unnamu; deshiem poinaru, tertem poinaru, voboasam to chenu kalupukuntu unnamu. Idi vendi bangaru katcheri palintsu nayena.*

2. *Na talli Parvati Parmashvari, dandam, dandam, chellama, chellama ayo, Papi Konda devata, Rekapalli Mutielamma, pulimera razu, rendi venavaru venatlu kanavaru kaninetlu tsala dandalu; no tallularu no peddalara, perentalara, oh Potrazu, Papi Konda devata, tsala santo shamu to rendi, anna kopalu tapalu vodena chellamu, chellamu, dandam rende; adi taparadu, palliki bonkaradu, Madi Konda Mutielamma, Rollagandi Rokelamma, Pantapalli Potrazu, Pantapalli Mavili, palintsu alintsu.*

come and eat, don't fear the black magic of our enemies; I am here to ward off evil spells."[1] In the meantime his brother, squatting at his side, curses the instigators of the black magic in more and more vehement language; son of a whore, fool, adulterer, and thief are some of the names by which he abuses the absent mischief makers. Finally the priest hands the chickens to Potreddi who once more puts them down before the grain, while Pentaya makes a last appeal to the goddess: "Great people have come, oh mother, do not insult us before them; for our welfare they have come, oh guard and protect us."[2]

At last the goddess hears the voice of the *pujari;* both chickens begin to peck at the grain and smiles of satisfaction light the faces of all spectators, who now include not only the members of the Reddi community but also many Koyas.

Once more both chickens are carried through the millet field to the stone image and the priest severs the head of first the white chicken and then the brown by drawing the necks against the edge of an upturned knife; he dips the bleeding gullets into the millet, throws away the fluttering bodies, places the heads in front of the stone, and in sprinkling them with millet and water murmurs an inaudible prayer.

Dusk has fallen and the white mist rising from the river lies low over the valley as the *pujari* followed by the assembly proceeds to the nearest field with a standing millet crop, which incidentally belongs to a Koya; here he scatters handfuls of the blood sprinkled millet in all directions chanting at each handful: "Deities of the Papi Hills, oh Mutielamma, we offer you the new things, which we too will eat; guard and protect us from all harm.[3]

When he has disposed of all the grain, the priest goes to the Mutielamma tree, heats two coconuts over a small fire, cracks them on a gnarled root and lets the milk run first over the foot of the tree and then over the sacred post. Several men offer baskets of cooked millet to the post and at last the priest puts a black chicken through the grain eating test and kills it, sprinkling the blood on the sacred post. Suddenly, while all are still gathered round the post, there is an uproar; several boys have stolen some of the sweetened millet-balls from the sacrificial place, and are pursued with many shouts and yells through the fields. However, this is part of the rite, and thieves and pursuers eat the millet balls together.

The public ceremony has now come to an end and the women pour water in a circle round the sacred tree, and both they and the children bow down in silent prayer.

All the offerings are now collected in a basket and taken to the

1. *Vadi noru kalola paravaledu, tinu ma talli, databolu chaste parava ledu, nenu na.*

2. *Doralalu votcharu viri mundu ava manimtsaku; ma chemam koraku votchiaru, doralu, memu chemanga undale.*—This utterance was an allusion to our presence.

3. *Papi Konda Devata, Mutielamma kota vostovalu istunam, memu tinamu, chemanga undale.*

priest's house, where he will eat them with his family.

As the full moon rises behind the black silhouetted palms the gathering breaks up and all return to the village. But as they pass an old tamarind tree, which is sacred to Bibinancheri, a Mohammedan goddess, some of the men halt, split a coconut and address the goddess shouting all together and at the top of their voices: "Oh, lords, let us be free of fevers, coughs, colds and all illnesses; another day we will celebrate the flag festival, now we cannot do it so forgive us; do not be angry with us."[1]

Soon every family, Reddi and Koya alike, is gathered round their own hearth and the householder offers a little of the new millet which his wife has cooked in an unused pot to the departed relatives. From this night on all the villagers may eat of this season's millet and it will not be long before the harvest begins.

### *A Reddi Wedding.*

For the last week the village of Kakishnur has been in a state of excitement. A few days ago a fourfold wedding was celebrated and now two other weddings are due to take place. Originally all six couples had intended to be married at the same time, but the parents of two of the brides, both from Kondepudi, cancelled the ceremony at the eleventh hour on the pretext that they had too much work on the fields. The disappointed bridegrooms, Kopal Viraya and Buzar Gangaya, were badly hit for they had already contributed to the entertainment of their co-villagers on the evening before the first wedding, and now, unless they could celebrate the nuptials so soon that no new show of hospitality would be expected, they were faced with the prospect of having to feast the villagers a second time. Messengers were therefore sent to Kondepudi to try and induce the brides' parents to change their minds and yesterday the mediators returned with the good news, that the Kondepudi people have at last consented to come to the wedding. The bridegrooms themselves took no part in the negotiations and Kopal Viraya, a lively boy of about twenty, has never seen his bride, who is said to be quite a small girl.

The morning of the wedding day finds the bridegrooms' families and their nearest relations busy with preparations. The men have brought large bundles of *ada*-leaves[2] from the jungle, and are now occupied in making hundreds of leaf-plates and cups, using slivers of bamboo for stitching. Several Koyas and Malas from Koinda have already arrived to provide the music for the wedding, and they squat under the eaves of the houses, relating the latest gossip from the neighbourhood and collecting the news of Kakishnur.

1. *Doralu memu jeveramolu, dogolu, tselabolu yemi lekonda undale. Jenda Panduga mendu (chestanu) ippudu cheye lemu koapam vodu.*

2. *Bauhinia vahlii.*

Nobody pays much attention when the *veju* Narpal Viraya, followed by two children carrying small pots, leaves the village and crossing the stream where women are washing their gala clothes approaches the tree-stump sacred to Mutielamma. Viraya decorates the wood with red and yellow *bottu* powder and places an offering of rice and turmeric on a leaf on the ground. He squats down and prays to the goddess for the health and safety of the villagers and the guests that will come to the wedding (Fig. 58), and then at a short distance from the stump he pours a little water on the ground and murmurs a short invocation to Konda Razu.

The *veju's* morning task is not yet complete. Some months ago Buzar Gangaya one of the bridegrooms, was seriously ill and when it was discovered that a *konda devata* especially associated with his family, but whose cult he had neglected, was the cause of the illness, a cock and a goat were promised to placate the deity's wrath. Gangaya has no money to buy a goat just now, but without a sacrifice it would be dangerous to embark on so serious a venture as marriage; it has therefore been decided to offer a cock to the deity and to postpone the sacrifice of a goat to some later date.

Gangaya sits silently on the veranda of his house leaning against the house post. Narpal Viraya and another magician, Narpal Gangaya from Chintakonda, squat in front of him, the one holding a cock, the other a handful of rice. Incense is smouldering in two leaf cups and the magicians, while trying to make the cock peck the rice, recite prayers, their voices often sinking to an undertone.

" Deities of the Papi Hill, mountain goddesses, come without harming us. To you we will offer a flawless male goat, we beg you to accept what we offer. Oh, mother, earth goddess, mother of the oath,[1] this is the offering we vowed to you. This we have promised you thrice; we do not lie, we do not break our pledged word. Through the copper bars[2] look graciously at us."[3]

As the incantion stops, the cock swallows some rice, and Viraya strews a little rice on Buzar Gangaya's head and holds the cock so that it can peck up the grains. This satisfies the magicians; they call another man, who rapidly severs the cock's head with a large knife. They let the blood drop into a leaf-cup and Narpal Viraya dips his finger into the blood and thrice imprints it on the forehead of the prospective bridegroom. Then carrying the leaf-cup full of blood together with the head of the fowl, a wing-feather and a claw, Narpal Viraya goes to the outskirts of the settlement and squatting on his heels once

1. Oaths are usually sworn by Bhu Devi.

2. The statues of Hindu deities are sometimes caged in with copper bars.

3. *Papi Konda devala lara ḳonda chede lara salanga randi. Miḳu melaina merḳapolu mertsanga pellutamu ago miḳu pellutamu. Talli Bhu devi sachi talli idugo ni moḳu. Idugo mumaliḳi suma paliḳi banḳamu annuḳuna mala tapamu ragi tsuvalato idugo tsudu.*

more begins to chant:

"Goddess of the Seven Hills, we salute you with this offering, which we promised, eat of it, oh Gandama Razu[1] I will think of you. Oh mothers, accept this, oh hill deities, oh great mothers, look on us graciously great warriors; look on us graciously.[2]

Invocations of many more deities follow this initial phrase, and at last the magician flings away blood, head, feathers and claw, and finally some water. Then he returns to Buzar Gangaya's house, collects the cock, which he will eat together with his colleague from Chintakonda and returns to his own house.

The sun is high in the sky before the party to fetch the brides from Kondepudi is ready to leave. It consists of five men and five women, all young and married. They are not the closest relatives of the bridegroom, but belong to various clans, and seem to be chosen for their friendly relations with the people of Kondepudi. Most of the men wear white turbans and the women are carefully dressed in bright colours. They carry several small pots of food as presents for the brides' parents and two oblong plaited boxes containing saris for the brides. A Madiga drummer accompanies the wedding party to the Godavari, where they get into two dug outs and paddle downstream to Kondepudi.

In Kakishnur the preparations for the feast continue. Several men are busy cooking large quantities of food; in an abandoned unwalled house they have dug a long ditch and filled it with firewood. Over the flames they have placed four large pots containing two kinds of curry and are stirring the reddish brew with long wooden ladles (Fig. 50). Other men sit about smoking and joking with the prospective bridegrooms. Meanwhile the women are husking and cleaning the millet which the bridegrooms have distributed this morning and which will be cooked for the feast. There is no hurry or bustle. There is plenty of time. The bridal party is not expected back before dusk, for the parents of the brides are sure to entertain both the messengers and their own fellow-villagers with food and drink before they allow them to leave.

It is well after night fall when a crowd gathers in the piazza of the upper settlement. The women are dressed in their best; their hair is smoothed and some have flowers in their knots while others wear fine silver chains looped across the back of the head. Near huge, flickering fires Madigas squat, relentlessly beating their circular drums; the harsh, piercing sound is quite different from the mellow, sonorous tone of the double membrane drums that the Reddis play at their annual festivals and almost drowns the squeaking trumpets of the Malas and Koyas. Suddenly there is a stir and the crowd flocks from the piazza to the slope outside the village. A light is seen approaching from the Goda-

1. Name of a Hindu god.

2. *Yedu kondalamma idugo dandam idugo mimoku idugo tinandi, vo, Gandama tallutsukunta vo tallulara idugo Kondamma peddamma garu zagrataga virulu surulu zagrataga tsudandi.*

vari; it is the torch of the washerman who has come from Koinda to act as master of ceremonies and is now conducting the bridal party to the village. There has been some delay, for the men of Kakishnur have had to make two trips to fetch all the wedding guests from Kondepudi. Though the people of Kondepudi possess their own boats, they did not use them, but insisted on their privilege of being conveyed to the bridegroom's village by his friends and relatives. Guests from Tumileru, Pochavaram, Parantapalli, Kollur and Telladibala have arrived in their own boats or on foot, but all have gathered on the river-bank or in the houses of friends in the lower settlement to join the bridal procession.

The men of Kakishnur meet the procession near a group of tamarind trees at the foot of the hill and invite the guests to sit down and refresh themselves before entering the village. Leaf plates are distributed and the hosts hustle round serving out millet-balls and curry. Others offer the visitors tobacco, and this is accepted with even greater keenness than the food; there are joking complaints by some women when the supply runs low. Buzar Kanaya the young *patel,* who was married last week, and several of the other young men handing round the tobacco are slightly tipsy, for they have spent the afternoon in drinking arrack bought at the shop on the other side of the Godavari at the expense of the bridegrooms.

The brides alone do not join in the meal but remain hidden under two enormous patched umbrellas, one white and one black; beside them on the ground are several baskets containing the household goods and the clothes which they have brought to their new homes. When the meal is over and the procession reforms, six women hoist a sari over the heads of the brides; this serves as a canopy, and the cortège moves up the hill towards the village to meet a similar procession, consisting of the women of Kakishnur, who also move under a sari canopy, though amongst them there is no person corresponding in ceremonial importance to the two brides. Half-way up the steep slope, when the two groups come face to face they halt and the women begin to sing. The leaders of the choir are not Reddi women, but the wives of Telugu merchants from the country round Rajahmundry, who live in Kakishnur for purposes of trade. The Reddis seem to have little idea of the meaning of their song and sing in a halting and artless manner as though unsure of the text:

> " Oh woman, let me kiss your ring
> and the necklace made of fine chain,
> Oh goddess of fortune!
> He robbed the garments of beautiful milkmaids
> Those beautiful makers of milk and curd.
> Oh goddess of fortune!
> He robbed their jewels

And hid in the trees.
Oh goddess of fortune!
Your father's sister has tied the new sari
Now you look as fair as Gauri, the wife of Shiva.
Oh milkmaids, oh Krishna
Give us your blessings."[1]

At the end of the song the Kakishnur women hand over a flat brass dish with a lighted wick floating in oil to the bridal procession, and both parties move up the hill to a house which has been assigned as "rest house" for the occasion; there the brides and their female relations will remain for the next hour or so.

In the *pedda dare* Malas, Madigas and Koyas play drums and trumpets and the washerman, standing in the centre of the open place, pours more and more oil on his torch, which as the moon sets is the main source of light.

The men guests stand in a semicircle in front of Buzar Gangaya's house, and the women of Kakishnur pour water from brass vessels over their feet to wash off the dust of the journey. Then follows a solemn ceremony of fraternization. One after the other the men of Kakishnur embrace each guest, chest to chest and cheek to cheek, first on one side then on the other. When all the men of the two villages have thus sealed their friendship, three men of Kondepudi pair off with three men from Kakishnur and stand in the middle of the circle; two women mark their foreheads with turmeric paste and press small quantities of grain into the hand of each; and the men throw the grain into the air. After the ceremonies there is a short pause in the proceedings but soon the drums which have been silent for a few moments roll again and announce the next item in wedding ceremonial.

A cot is put down in front of the "rest-house." It is covered with a white cloth and a procession of Kakishnur women under a sari canopy surge forwards and backwards across the *pedda dare,* each time depositing millet cakes on two large leaves spread out on the cloth. Behind the cot, squat the young headman of Kondepudi and the father's brother

1. *Anganamani modu ungara midenta*
*Sana tige gunta 'nta,*
*Rangamaina, ullu palu migada*
*Ambaku jeya,*
*Coppi seralalu,*
*Dongatanamu chesi*
*Ambaku jeya*
*Botta siri golsu*
*Chetla Kegi*
*Atta batta katalli*
*Kotta Guari nattula*
*Goppalu Krishna*
*Mangalam*

There can be little doubt, that this song is only a fragment of a longer and more intelligible Telugu marriage song; the allusion to Krishna and his adventures with the milkmaids have no meaning to the Reddis.

of one of the brides, who together count the cakes each time the crowd of women recedes; when there are nine cakes on one leaf and eleven cakes on the other, the crowd comes pressing round the cot and the Kondepudi *patel* declares that as many cakes as there are on the cot, so many rupees must be paid for the brides as a reward for the milk their mothers have given them. When it is agreed that Rs. 8 and a sari shall be paid for one girl and Rs. 10 and a sari for the other, the people of Kondepudi wrap up the cakes and hold them as tokens for the payment of the bride-price.

The piazza in the centre of the village is now crowded but the fires have been allowed to die down and the band is silent. The food is ready and in a little time leaf-plates are spread in front of the visitors; backwards and forwards hurry the men of Kakishnur with enormous quantities of millet, vegetable curry, dal and tamarind sauce, helping the millet from baskets and winnowing-fans and ladling out the liquid curries. Modesty is not the motto of guests at a Reddi wedding, and the visitors seem imbued with the one idea of grabbing as much food as possible. It is not that their appetites are so large; sufficient food has been kept in readiness to fill every hungry stomach; but many a woman has three or even four large leaf-plates spread out in front of her and professes unashamedly that one plate is for her absent husband and the others for her children or aged parents; when the food is served she wraps it up in leaves and puts it into a basket which she has specially brought to the wedding for this purpose.

When the guests have all eaten their fill, the people of Kakishnur sit down to their own meal; some eat in the open, while others take their food into the houses. It is only the brides who do not partake of the wedding dinner; deadly tired from the ceremonies in their own village and the excitement, they sleep peacefully in the "rest-house" while others enjoy their wedding feast.

After the meal there is a general lull. Many people sit gossiping in the houses or round the fires in the piazza, mothers suckle their babies and many sleep, curled up on the verandas or even in the open, their cloths drawn well over their heads.

It is a beautiful starlit night and about midnight two men bring mango-leaves tied to long ropes with which the washerman must decorate the marriage booth in front of Buzar Gangaya's house. One of the merchant women directs the proceedings, while the washerman climbs on top of the booth and fixes the festoons. Custom decrees that only he may hang up the mango-leaves and for this he demands As. 2 and 2½ seers of rice in addition to the fee which the bridegrooms are paying him for his attendance and his services as torch-bearer. The bridegroom's people are prepared to give the rice and one anna, but they refuse to pay any more. On hearing this the washerman climbs off the booth and the preparations are held up. After long and vehe-

ment bargaining the Reddis resign themselves to paying As. 2 as well as the 2½ seers of rice; these are tipped into the washerman's loin-cloth, who with a wry smile goes back to the work of decorating the booth.

The brides are still in the rest-house. Now they are woken up and given a ceremonial bath by their relatives very similar to the ones their friends and relations have already given them in Kondepudi. Sitting on the knees of near relatives, their hair is rinsed with oil, and then naked but for a small loin cloth, they sit on small wooden stools in the courtyard and pots of warm water are poured over their heads. They shiver in the crisp air, but are quickly taken back into the house and dressed in the white bridal saris. Baskets of food arrive from the bridegrooms' houses and leaf-plates are spread out on the floor of the inner room. The mothers of the brides help their daughters to food; the child-bride of Kopal Viraya eats heartily but the elder girl, conscious of being the centre of so much attention can hardly swallow a mouthful. Suddenly there are Madiga drummers in the courtyard of the house, and people begin pouring in to witness an important ceremony, the transfer of the bride from her father's to her husband's clan.

Kopal Andamma, the elder girl, who is Buzar Gangaya's bride, is now seated on the knees of a middle aged woman from Kondepudi, and one of Gangaya's relatives gives the woman an anna coin. Another woman then takes the girl by the shoulders and with the words. "You have been a Kopal girl, now you become a Buzar girl," lifts the bride from the woman's knees and this is greeted by a shout from all those present. After the same ceremony has been enacted with the bride of Kopal Viraya, the crowd drifts across the piazza to the houses of the bridegrooms where a similar though in their case rather meaningless ceremony takes place; each bridegroom is seated on the knees of a young woman, and lifted up with a shout, but there is, of course, no changing of clan-names.

These ceremonies over, everybody flocks into the piazza. The brides are brought in procession from the "rest-house" and the bridegrooms surrounded by relatives come from their houses; the two processions take up positions on opposite sides of the piazza while the young men take the floor and begin to dance the wedding-dance. Closely ranged one behind the other in two lines, they move up and down the piazza, the lines first facing each other, then passing and repassing. With arms outstretched and legs wide apart the dancers in each line lurch now to the left and then to the right, accompanying the dance with wild shouts and screams (Fig. 56 and 57).[1] So violent and unbridled are the movements that one row of dancers crashes into a bamboo fence which collapses under the onslaught.

When the dancers are exhausted and panting, the music stops for

1. These photographs were taken on the morning after the wedding when the dance was repeated for my benefit.

a moment, but almost immediately it begins again and the two processions move into the centre of the piazza until the canopies of brides and grooms are parallel. The drumming swells into a terrific crescendo, the crowd parts, leaving a small open space in the centre and two strong young men lifting one of the brides and her bridegroom astride their hips circle round each other, ready to charge, butt each other with their shoulders and swing their riders into a clash. The same play is repeated with the other bridal couple to the encouraging shouts and laughter of the assembled crowd.

The barber, an elderly and rather dignified man, who has been summoned from Tekpalli to function at the wedding, but has hitherto remained in the background breaks into the circle. He has now to tie the bride's sari to the bridegroom's loin-cloth and demands five copper coins to tie into the knot. As he conducts the first couple to the marriage booth, the female relatives of the bride sit down on the path, barring the way, and declare that none shall pass until the bridegroom's people have put money into the vessels they hold on their heads. Again there is some rather noisy argument and there seem to be some practical difficulties in producing any more small change. Finally, however, one of the merchant women comes to the rescue with the necessary coins and the women begin to wash the feet of bride and groom. Then the barber leads the couple three times round a mat on which are two heaps of uncooked millet each surmounted with a small vessel full of water. The bride's female relatives hold on to her sari, as if they did not want to leave her alone in this decisive moment. Then the bridal couple sits down in front of the millet, beside which are two leaf-plates of cooked rice and paste made of rice flour and turmeric.

Again there is a long pause while the barber conducts the other couple to their marriage booth. When he returns the bridegroom's father's brother's son takes some rice from the plate, scatters it over the couple and then smears their foreheads with turmeric. His example is followed by all the other relatives, and each wedding guest must then throw some coppers for the barber into the small brass vessel in front of the bridal pair. But there is a general shortage of copper coins and most people borrow from the merchant woman, who herself short of change replenishes her supply from time to time by tipping out the contents of the brass vessel, counting it and then relending it to the wedding guests.

The merchant woman keeps careful track of everyone's debts and the barber has a sharp eye on the contents of the brass vessel, for tomorrow the merchant woman will have to refund to him whatever she took from the collection money.

It is 3-30 a.m. as the barber squats down before the couple and cleans their finger- and toe-nails with a special small instrument in preparation of the final rite. He then empties the brass vessel of coin,

throws a remark at the merchant woman as to the sum he expects her to produce on the morrow, and collects all the millet into a cloth to take home after the wedding.

But now there is another interruption: the Madiga drummers and the Mala and Koya pipers clamour for money, threatening that they will not allow the ceremonies to proceed unless their demands are satisfied. A heated argument follows and the bridegroom's relatives declare that they have spent all their cash; to-morrow they will borrow some more money from their employer to pay them their dues. But the musicians are not to be silenced and at last the petty merchant women, who have been running the financial side of the wedding all evening, help to overcome the difficulties. Yet hardly has the band struck up, when there is another commotion, for some young girls of the village bringing freshly drawn water from the stream for the bridal bath are demanding a fee for their services. They cover the pots with their saris and refuse to yield until the hard-pressed relatives of the bridegroom have given each two coppers.

With all the bargaining another three quarters of an hour have elapsed and the bride and bridegroom can hardly keep their eyes open. The child-bride leans against her aunt, who throughout the ceremony has been at her elbow prompting her in the ritual. She looks very weary and hardly takes any interest when her sari is removed preparatory to a last bath. Women relatives now undress the bridal couples, who stand naked but for a narrow loin-cloth, their hair is loosened and the bridegroom bends over the bride so that the cold water, that is poured over his back, runs off his shoulders on to hers.

Dressed again, they are made to sit on the mat this time cross-legged and facing each other. One of the women comes from the bridegroom's house bringing two dishes of husked millet, on one is the *pustie*, the bridal locket on a saffron coloured ribbon, and on the other a two-anna piece, which is appropriated by the barber as his fee for the next item in the ceremonial. Bride and groom cup their right hands and the barber fills the groom's hand with millet; the groom then pours the millet into the bride's hand, and the bride in turn pours it back again into the hand of the groom and this is repeated five times and ends by the groom throwing the rice over the bride's head. The same procedure is repeated, but this time the barber gives the millet first to the bride, who finishes by throwing it over the groom's head.

The moment for the essential rite has now arrived. The barber takes up the *pustie* and holds it out for all to see. Those present greet this emblem of respectable marriage with folded hands and then the barber hands it over to the bridegroom, who ties it with evident embarrassment and much fumbling round the bride's neck, As the couple rises, those assembled scramble for the dishes of rice and each guest showers a handful over the couple.

The barber then turns to the east and taking the newly wedded pair a little to one side points out a small star in the clear moonless sky; putting rice into their hands he tells them to throw it at the star and when they have complied, they are given some betel and may retire to a well-earned sleep; the bridegroom to his own house and the bride to join her relatives in the rest house. It is 4-30 a.m. and for them the night's ceremonies have come to an end, but the barber and those of the guests, who are not yet overcome with sleep, attend the final wedding rites of the second couple.

The grey of dawn is creeping over the hills, when the music finally stills and the village sleeps, but hardly has the sun risen before the first women, not only Kakishnur's housewives, but also women guests from other village, are up fetching water. No one else stirs in the village, till late in the forenoon, when the roll of drums once more brings villagers and guests into the piazza to witness the first ceremonial bath of the wedded pairs. The two young husbands as well as the child bride are stripped to the waist, but the elder girl keeps on her bodice as well as her small loin-cloth. Again the couples are made to stand up and the water flows from the brides on to the bridegrooms (Fig. 55). This morning the difference in the attitude of the two brides is even more noticeable than during the night's ceremonies. The smaller girl seems rather tired and slightly numbed by the unending sequence of ceremonies, but evinces little shyness and looks round with expressionless eyes; the elder girl on the other hand is evidently embarrassed and keeps her eyes cast to the ground, without giving the bridegroom as much as a glance.

Soon after the bath follows the paying of the bride-price. Again a cot is placed in front of the "rest-house" and covered with a white cloth (Fig. 59). The men crowd on to the veranda and the women stand in the street. A relative of Kopal Viraya counts out eight silver rupees on to a leaf-plate and places a neatly folded sari beside it on the cot, but Buzar Gangaya is not able to pay the bride-price in full and his relatives produce only five rupees instead of eleven, promising a further instalment at a later date. But this is not acceptable to the people of Kondepudi; they declare that the bride's father who as custom prescribes has not been present at the wedding, instructed them to bring home the full bride-price. After a lively argument, the Kondepudi people agree at last to accept five rupees and the promise of early settlement.

A plate with rice, coloured yellow with turmeric, is then placed on the cot and Narpal Viraya, the magician, takes some of the rice and scatters it on the coins, praying for the health and welfare of all those present:

"Guard your children, guard the people who came and those who go; those coming from the east, those coming from the west, those coming from the south, and those coming from the north; with your

left hand send them safely home, oh mother, we salute you.[1]

The ceremonial handing over of the bride-price at a wedding is the appropriate occasion for the payment of outstanding bride-prices and Buzar Kanaya, the young *patel* who was married last week, now pays Rs. 2 and a sari towards the price of his bride. Another man receives Rs. 3 from the brother of his sister's deceased husband, who is responsible for a still unpaid part of the bride-price.

When all these transactions are settled, the crowd disperses and most families entertain such relatives and friends as have come from neighbouring villages with a meal specially prepared for the occasion.

It is not until 4 p.m. that the villagers and guests assemble for the last time on the piazza, where with a final roll of drums the brides are formally entrusted to the care of their new families. An elderly man of Kondepudi, who seems to have imbibed a good deal of liquor, places the hand of each bride in the hand of her mother-in-law, asking her to treat the girl well: "Be kind to the girl, and if she makes mistakes think always that she is a very young girl and knows no better." Then he addresses himself to the bridegrooms and the brothers of the brides and admonishes them to show each other hospitality. If the one visits the other, the host shall try to provide some palm-wine to entertain his guest, but the visitor should not expect to be given masses of food!

This speech is made in a slightly humorous way and arouses a good deal of hilarity among the spectators, who seem to agree that palm-wine is essential for the entertainment of guests.

The festivities have now come to an end and the women from other villages retire into the houses of their friends. There they exchange their gaily coloured saris for drabber every day wear, packing the gala clothes in baskets or tying them up in bundles for the homeward journey. The musicians, the barber and the washerman clamour round the bridegroom's house for the rest of their dues; they too are anxious to be on the road so that they can reach their villages before nightfall. There is a small group inside the courtyard; the bridegrooms are trying to borrow some cash from the wife of a big timber merchant, who yesterday brought all the provisions for the wedding from Kunavaram on the British side of the river, and has now returned to witness the last scenes of the ceremonies. Both bridegrooms have to pay for their magnificent wedding with many years of hard toil in the forest.

Some of the guests leave on foot, while the majority accompanied by Madiga drummers repair in a body to the bank of the Godavari. The Tumileru people are rowed across the river and then the Kakishnur men take the people of Kondepudi on board. Two dug-outs are lashed together and the heavily ladened craft is poled into midstream and paddled slowly down to Kondepudi (Fig. 53).

1. "*Kae pillelu chellelu, vachinavarlu, poinavarlu, yedema cheyi tolu turpu nunchi vachinavarluku, pardamara nunchi vachinavarluku, datsinanunchi vachinavarluku, vutarnunchi vachinavarluku, yerma cheyi tolu saga tolu talli, dandam.*"

*The Sadhu's Garden.*

The sun rising over the Papi Konda Range touches the crowns of the tamarind trees. Light floods the Godavari valley and the ripening hill-fields on the left bank have long lain fully in the sun. It is only here in Parantapalli, at the foot of the steep mountains, that the mornings are long and the dew glitters on the grass till nine and longer.

After the fresh nights of late November, the Reddis huddle on their open verandas beside small fires, snug under the low hanging eaves of their thatched houses, drinking last cupfuls of thick, brown sago-gruel before going off to the forest. Soon they loosen their buffaloes and bullocks from the posts in front of their doors and set off to fell bamboo on some distant slope, where the animals graze till evening, and are then used for hauling the bamboo over the narrow, stony, jungle-paths to the banks of the Godavari. This is the cutting season and the merchant knows only too well how to deal with men who prefer to look after their fields rather than work in the forest, and he keeps check of their movements by means of his private informants, who are always the last to leave the village in the morning. It is not long before the village is emptied of all men but Ventla Kanaya who suffers from yaws and walks painfully with a stick, and white haired tottering Kopal Tamreddi, who is too old to do any but the lightest work.

Most women linger over their housework, but a few leave for the fields, carrying gruel in pots to relieve those who have watched the ripening crops since dawn. Unlike other Reddis the people of Parantapalli never sleep in the fields even in the last months before harvest, for they are afraid of the long dark nights when *patudu donga* are said to be abroad. Too many rumours are current of hungry *konda devata;* too often has a mysterious death overtaken their kinsmen and friends, and they would rather risk the complete destruction of their crops, which, being much neglected in the felling season, are in any case weak and sickly, than spend a night outside the safety of their own houses.

Gradually the village is deserted, and small children follow their mothers, who, with babies in their arms, cross the rocky stream to a small island situated between the arms of a rushing stream. A few steps lead up to a small wooden gate set in a low roughly built stone wall. Here the Sadhu has created a beautiful garden retreat; a few small thatched huts are scattered among the trees, red hibiscus flowers between bananas in a garden patch, and in a grove of tall, straight-boled jungle-mangoes stands a small stone *lingam,* newly garlanded with the red blossoms of the sunrise *puja.*

Outside the hermitage on a nearby slope several women are engaged in breaking up the earth and filling it into flat baskets. These they carry by relays up the stone-steps into the hermitage and tip on to the site for the new hut which is being built in readiness for the great festival

of Shivaratri, when many pilgrims of all castes will come to worship at the forest shrine. Amongst the women works the Swami of the hermitage, a man of small stature but with a body perfectly modelled. Wrapped round his loins is a narrow cloth, orange-coloured as the garb of all saintly men, his forehead is freshly smeared with ash, and his long hair hangs in matted ringlets on his shoulders. Silently he works with the women, and the energy with which he drives his iron digging-stick into the earth and the play of his muscles show that long austerities have not weakened his physique.

After some time he returns to his hermitage and the peace of his shady well cared-for garden, where only a few rays of sun penetrate the thick foliage of mango-trees and chequer the smooth red earth with a golden pattern. Between the twisted arms of a creeper a baby sleeps in a yellow sari hammock and close by two naked children, their heads covered with unruly curls, sit chewing bananas and rocking the baby.

As the Swami passes the children a smile comes to his lips, so irresistible and serene that it is in itself an explanation for his fame throughout the Godavari valley. For in this moment of animation his smile and his clear eyes hold forth the promise of the peace that he has found. It is a smile, not of world-resignation, but of hopeful love, of an almost childlike optimism that warms and soothes the many who come to the hermitage.

The women and children of Parantapalli are at home in his garden. Every morning they come there to work, reinforcing the island against the inroads of the streams, constructing grass huts for pilgrims, enlarging the pool where the Swami bathes and tending the plants and flowers. At mid-day they will stop their work and gather in the shade for the midday meal, which the Swami himself has spent most of the morning in preparing. Near his own hut there is a small shelter with two stone hearths and several brass cauldrons in which rice, millet, dal and vegetable curry are cooked. The variation of the fare depends on the generosity of wealthy devotees, who from time to time send stores to the *ashram*. But the Swami's fame has spread through the Godavari valley and large parts of the Telugu country, and he hardly ever lacks food with which to feed the Reddis of Parantapalli and those who come from other villages to tell him their troubles. He is the confidant of the aboriginals. He calls them 'rejected parents' and treats them like children; and they return his devotion by a sincere trust. Rarely does he try to instruct them in religious matters, however, and it is seldom that more than a few words pass between them. He believes that they could not yet understand the truth of God and it is to the satisfaction of their bodily needs that he devotes his attention; the daily meals served in his garden are a practical demonstration of his belief that only by banishing want and anxiety can the path be paved for moral and spirit-

ual progress, and that examples do more to inspire men with love and human kindness, than half-understood sermons.

Usually the days pass quietly in the hermitage, but today the tranquillity is suddenly broken. The sound of voices rises from the river-bank, where a large sailing boat has put to land. A wealthy Telaga from Rajahmundry, owner of one of the motor-launches that ply the Godavari, has brought his family to pay their respects to the Swami. They have arrived complete with servants, bedding and sacks of food to spend the night in the *ashram* and to feast the Reddis of Parantapalli. For this is one of the demands which the Swami makes on his affluent devotees. They must parade their practical charity, and prove their worthiness of spiritual enlightenment by preparing and serving a meal to the Reddis.

Soon the scene has changed and the peace of the garden has given way to bustle and activity. The Telaga, a stout man with a black moustache stripped to the waist, a sacred thread over the left shoulder, and a petunia-coloured *dhoti* flapping about his knees, supervises the preparation of the feast; he shouts directions to all corners of the garden: to the servants in not too clean clothes pounding dal and grinding spices, to his wife bending over the great steaming cooking pots, to his daughter who covers the ground with artistic designs of powdered chalk, tracing combinations of dots and circles, and sweeping curves with great precision. Insensitive to the Swami's personality and oblivious of the garden's atmosphere of peace and quiet, he orders the preparations of the meal with as much noise and bombast as he would order the loading of one of his own cargo boats.

Meanwhile, a little to one side under the spreading leaves of a giant creeper, some Reddi girls are making leaf-plates, deftly stitching them with split bamboo. But the Swami himself seems unperturbed by all the commotion and sits cross-legged under his usual tree, deep in meditation.

It is only when the meal is ready and Reddi women and children are seated in a rough circle with large leaf-plates before them that the Swami comes over and helps the Telegas in serving out the food. Everybody seems happy. The Telagas from a sense of pride and self-satisfaction at providing so sumptuous a meal, the Reddis in anticipation of so many good things to eat, and the Swami because he is always pleased when he sees others emulating his example of pious action. The donor of the feast and his family are lavish with their helpings, serving out rice with their hands in such quantities that is almost like shovelling earth. There are five or six different dishes: plain rice in great steaming heaps, fistfuls of yellow turmeric rice flavoured with spices, dal-purée, curried vegetables, mango-chutney, curd and rice sweetened with sugar. When all the Reddis have been served twice or thrice and small children have swallowed almost incredible masses of food, the

Telegas sit down in the midst of the Reddis, and even the Swami and two Brahmin devotees join in the meal.

When the Reddi women have finished they pack up the remains into leaf-parcels to take home for their menfolk, tidy up the garden and depart to the village, without paying much attention to their hosts. Nor does the Telega family visit the village; to-night they will sleep in one of the little thatched huts within the *ashram,* and tomorrow morning they will embark and sail down the river back to Rajahmundry. After some time they may again visit Parantapalli, but their contact with the Reddis will be just as fleeting. It is only in the peaceful garden of the Swami where Reddis and the pilgrims from the distant lowlands meet in an atmosphere of universal equality and brotherhood.

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Two years have passed. It is an autumn morning in 1943. The glittering Godavari, the hills with their patches of cultivation carved from the thick forest and the ten odd Reddi houses of Parantapalli are the same. But the Swami's hermitage is changed. That air of peace, that quality of remoteness as of an enchanted garden is gone. Buildings of brick and tiles fill out the shadows under the mango trees, there is a cement well where pilgrims draw water, and the altar of God, before roofed by the shady branches of tall-boled trees, is now housed in an iron barred shrine, its floor cemented and decorated with a regular pattern comprising the Telugu lettering *Om.* Only the Swami's dwelling is still the same small, thatched hut, its only furniture a goat's skin beside the hearth. The years have witnessed the growth of the *ashram's* fame; its devotees steadily increase, many patrons lavish their wealth on modern amenities for the convenience of the disciples, some of whom have made it their permanent abode, and some pious widows, there retreating from the world, have introduced an atmosphere of orderly domesticity.

On this sunlit morning some twenty Reddis and Koyas from Koinda have arrived and squat before a young bespectacled Brahmin, the Swami's principal assistant, who explains the conditions of work for the *ashram*: he hands them notes of ten and five rupees. On his white shirt are stamped in red the words "Poverty Relief" under a rayed sun and the Telugu letters *Om.* These are the symbols of the Swami's new organization, designed to bring relief to the Reddis and Koyas all along the river bank. From the stillness of the *ashram* at Parantapalli, from the many hours of silent meditation has grown first the idea and then the realization of a co-operative scheme by which the Reddis are, by their own efforts, to improve their lot; the exploitation of timber and bamboo has been wrested from the hands of rapacious merchants and, guided and financed by the Swami and his helpers, the Reddis now take the forest coupes in auction, fell the timber and bamboos and float them

down the river to the market in Rajahmundry.

The Reddis and Koyas of Koinda look with wonder at the wealth put into their hands as advance payment for future deliveries of bamboos. This year their village is to co-operate for the first time in the scheme, but Kopal Kanaya, the headman of Parantapalli has experienced two years of these changed fortunes. He, whom all knew as an oppressed and timid man, ever anxious lest he offend against the power of the timber merchants, is now a self-possessed and dignified old man. Instead of his small *langoti* he wears a white loin cloth, a grey shirt, and across his shoulders is slung a navy blue sash with the imprint. "Poverty Relief;" on his head is cocked a jaunty cap of grey cloth. These are his office clothes, which he wears when going to the *ashram,* when visiting other villages, and on the great occasion of the year when, shepherded by the Swami's disciples, he travels to Paloncha and bids in the annual auction for the bamboo and timber coupes. Not that he understands much of the proceedings or has any clear idea of the five figured sums for which, after hard competition, he obtains the coupes. But he knows that the Swami and the new order have released him from fear and serfdom and given him and his tribesmen better food and ampler clothing, and have, above all, revived their self-respect so long crushed by the tyrannical rule of former masters. His clothes are to him a symbol of this change and in public he wears them with pride; but at work in forest, field and house he, like the other Reddis of Parantapalli and Kakishnur, are content with their accustomed dress of belt and *langoti.*

Down the ravine from their mountain home in Kutturvada come Pogal Ramaya and his cousin, their lithe bronze bodies burnished by shafts of sunlight that pierce the leaves above the jungle path. Bows in hand and axes on shoulder, like young gods they stride over the rocks of the waterfall to the island between the gurgling streams. Somewhere in a bundle they have their caps, sashes and shirts and when they enter the Swami's garden they are transformed into a kind of boy-scouts. But what do they care for æsthetic considerations? When they return to Kutturvada they will carry with them an ample supply of grain, salt, oil and spices instead of the miserable pittance which they used to get from their former employers.

The Reddis and Koyas of Koinda, their business over, wait contendedly for the meal without which no protegé of the Swami may leave. Other visitors sit about among the trees. Two Brahmin pilgrims mumble prayers, sitting cross-legged in front of the shrine; a young man newly arrived by launch from Bhadrachalam finishes washing his dhoti and hangs it out on a fence to dry; several women are busy cooking in the courtyard of the largest of the brick houses, wrangling over the work; a cat lies asleep in the sun; a great stud bull noses about amongst the kitchen refuse; and on the knoll by the front gate a small

group crowds round an elderly, bareheaded doctor from Kunavaram, who, on his frequent visits, looks after the health of the Parantapalli Reddis and has already banished the curse of yaws from the village. Just now he is not dispensing medicines but reading aloud from Vivekananda's lectures; the others listen in silence. The Swami himself joins the group for a few moments, smiling quiet approval. He is always content when his more educated disciples instruct each other in the teachings of the Vedanta; after a little he slips away and taking the path across the stream goes to the Reddi settlement of Repalli, a settlement of his own creation. Ten families of Reddis, who ten years ago fled the oppression of the timber merchants and the iniquities of subordinate officials by leaving Parantapalli and Jidugumma and crossing the border into British India, have, now the dawn of a new era has broken, returned to their former home. They have built their houses at Repalli in the shadow of the hermitage, the Swami securing their immediate future by giving them grain and cattle. Now they earn a living by work for the *ashram* and bamboo and timber cutting. The Swami calls to the young boys who are finishing their morning meal and leads them along the stony winding path to work on the lovely site above the river where he has laid out a fruit grove with hundreds of orange, lime and mango trees; trees that in years to come will bear fruit and offer shade to Reddis and pilgrims alike.

The Swami and his disciples are bent on freeing the aboriginals from want and oppression; the co-operative scheme is to give them a generous return for their work, ample food and better clothing. Is it also to remodel the Reddis' cultural life? For many years the Swami refrained from any attempts to imbue them with his religious precepts. Charitably, he helped them whenever he could, but he remained aloof from all their doings. But since he has become the Reddis' guide on the path to economic prosperity he strives to wean them from such habits and customs as are evil in his eyes: the drinking of palm wine, for instance, and the bloody sacrifice of animals. Not that he objects to the Reddis' eating meat; there are as many pigs and chickens in Parantapalli as elsewhere. It is the shedding of blood in the worship of God that he considers a perversion. So he teaches them to substitute coconuts for animals at their annual feasts. His role as bread-giver lends weight to his word and a good many Reddis now perform the rites for the Earth Mother and the other more or less benevolent deities in this bloodless style. But when disease and danger threaten and the magician diagnose the malignant influence of an offended deity, fear prevails and anxious relatives hastily promise the sacrifice of whatever animal the deity will accept. Old beliefs have still a powerful hold on the Reddis, but new ideas are taking root, and there can be little doubt that the Swami's work will have more than an ephemeral effect on the Reddis of Hyderabad. His condemnation of untouchability and caste-

distinction and his insistence on the equality of men and women counteracts to some extent the influence of rural Hinduism, but in general the work of the *ashram* encourages and hastens the Reddis' assimilation to the general culture pattern of the more advanced populations in the Godavari valley.

# PART IV.

# TRANSFORMATION OF REDDI ECONOMICS

CHAPTER XIII.

# OLD AND NEW ECONOMY.

MANY aspects of Reddi economics have already been described in full, but before we proceed to discuss the transition from a largely self-sufficient economy to a system dependent on exchange of goods and bartering of labour, it will be useful to recapitulate and supplement what we have learnt about the old economic order. With certain modifications this old order still persists in many of the remoter hill-villages, and no great stretch of imagination is required to visualize the life of the tribe in the times before the exploitation of forests provided new sources of income and intensified contact with neighbouring populations stimulated the growth of new wants. No sharp line divides the old and the new order. There was probably never an event in the history of the Reddis comparable to the day when the inhabitants of a South Sea island beheld the first European ship approaching their shore. And while in Melanesia and in America everything anterior to that first contact between native and western civilization can be regarded as indigenous, in Reddi culture no such distinction can be made; the absorption of new elements and the relinquishment of ancient habits has been a gradual and a long protracted process.

## *The Old Economy*

As long as the Reddis lived in the comparative seclusion of their hills they required little that they themselves could not provide. They built their houses of material taken from the surrounding jungle unhampered by forest laws and the reservation of certain types of trees, and the manner of construction was so simple that a man with the help of his closest relations or friends could easily erect a dwelling within a very few days. For food each household was self-sufficient. The men procured occasional meat by trapping and hunting with bow and arrow, and the women and children collected considerable quantities of edible wild fruits and plants. Both sexes combined in cultivating the hill-slopes, where they raised several kinds of millet and pulse. Land was ample and the amount of grain a family could reap depended mainly on the labour expended, but it was generally sufficient to form the basis of the Reddis' diet, which was varied by an assortment of jungle produce changing from season to season. Since all families grew the same crops and the potentialities of the surrounding jungle offered all food-gatherers equal opportunities there was, apart from the usual sharing of game,

little interchange of provisions among the members of a village-community. Pigs and chickens, and in some areas goats, were kept as domestic animals, and served mainly for sacrifices and food at feasts. They were at the same time the only form of movable property, and fines for social offences were as a rule expressed and paid in terms of pigs, goats or chickens. It does not seem, however, that domestic animals were often bartered or used as a medium of exchange; the numbers kept by any individual household were probably always very small.

The majority of implements used in the exploitation of the soil and the preparation of food were manufactured by the members of each household. The men made their bows and arrows, constructed traps, plaited baskets and mats, fashioned wooden spoons, pestles, pounding-tables and troughs for pounding sago, made gourd-bottles, skin-bags and the great dance-drums, while the women, apparently fully occupied with cooking, fetching water and wood, looking after pigs and fowls and above all the daily gathering of jungle produce, do not seem to have engaged in any craft of their own.

There remained, however, a number of implements which the Reddi could not produce himself: the iron axe with which to fell the jungle, the curved blade of the billhook, the knife for carving and basketry, the arrow-head, and the iron point of the digging-stick and, where hoes were used, the iron hoe-blades. All these were articles which the Reddi, though he must have used them for many centuries, had to procure from outsiders. There is little doubt that the Koya smiths and the Kammars, a primitive tribe of blacksmiths found today in many villages of the Godavari Region, have furnished the Reddi for a long time with the metal instruments so important in the prosecution of his jungle life. The goods tendered in exchange were probably baskets, in whose manufacture the Reddi was expert, jungle produce, such as honey and wax, or small quantities of grain.

Earthen pots, which have now almost completely superseded the cooking vessels of fresh bamboo-culms (cf. p. 103), seem to have been long regarded as necessities and bartered from the potters of the plains. At present the Reddis' clothes are all imported, and we have no indication as to how they were clad before they could procure cotton cloth. That Reddi women, having once understood the art of weaving, should have entirely lost this tradition, seems improbable, but we cannot rule out the possibility that in ancient times primitive weavers lived in the vicinity and that the Reddis were thus able to barter woven cloth long before they obtained it from professional traders.[1] Ornaments will hardly have counted among the imported goods, for cane-necklaces and armlets, strings of seed-beads, coils of peacocks' quills and an occasional

1. A caste of aboriginal weavers, called Netkonvarlu, living in symbiosis with Koyas, is still found to the north of the Samasthan of Paloncha.

FIG. 78. Gurgunta Chinnaya starting to make a plaited basket.

FIG. 79. The same basket half finished.

FIG. 80. Bamboos tied into rafts are floated down the Godavari.

flower will have sufficed for the Reddis' unsophisticated taste.

Iron implements and, at some later date, also pots and cloth, were thus the only articles that the Reddi was wont to procure from members of other tribes or castes; yet his demand for even these few requisites was so small that it could readily be satisfied by occasional barter transactions. Regular production for purposes of exchange was not needed.

There was no opportunity to accumulate wealth. All land was common property held jointly by the members of the village, and the primitive agricultural methods permitted no man to build up a reserve of grain. All possessions such as baskets or mats were perishable and without intrinsic value, and every household furnished its own requirements of these commodities. Even pigs, a source of wealth in many other primitive societies, can never have been bred by Reddis in any large numbers, for pigs of the hybrid variety found today in some hill villages require occasional feeding to tie them to the homestead, and the amount of refuse from Reddi 'kitchens,' which is the only fodder available, is strictly limited.

Thus there can have been neither poor nor rich among the Reddis; energy and hard work could increase a household's food supply, but there existed no medium of exchange and no hiring out of labour against wages. Assistance in house-building and occasionally in sowing or reaping was based on reciprocity, and if a man who had invited a few women of neighbouring households to help him reap his field gave each a measure of grain at the end of the day, it was a friendly gift and not a wage. The only services that had to be paid for were those of the *veju,* and when a member of a household fell ill, a cock or a few measures of grain sufficed for the *veju's* fee.

How the provision of pigs for the annual sacrifices was shared is a doubtful point. Today the owner of the animal is compensated in money, raised by public subscription, but it is probable that in the old times the members of the community provided pigs and chickens in turn.

Cash payments to outsiders, such as revenue or fines, are of course a comparatively recent element and, except for the limited barter of grain, baskets and jungle produce against iron implements, pots, and cloth, the tribe as a whole, as indeed each individual household, was economically independent.

### *Transition to a New Economy*

Today there are few groups of Reddis who are still self-sufficient, and none to whom our description of the old order applies without restrictions. New wants and new economic methods have reached the remotest corners of the Reddi country, and even money, the most recent medium of exchange, has become a necessity to every Reddi household. The ways by which the Reddis were gradually drawn into the network of a new system based on trade and the hiring of human labour, differ

in the various areas, and though in broad outline the process of change is fairly clear, we cannot everywhere discover the exact sequence of its initial stages.

What were the main factors that first led to the disruption of the self-sufficient economy? With the extension of an effective administration over the hill tracts, the Reddi became liable to money payments, for the use of the land and the products of the forests, and in order to meet these obligations he had to commute into cash many of his marketable goods, hitherto bartered against articles for his own consume. This alone breached the ramparts of the Reddi's self-sufficiency. But at the same time, or perhaps even earlier, sustained and growing contact with lowlanders instilled into him a taste for certain previously rare or even unknown commodities. No doubt some of these commodities, such as salt, certain spices, more substantial clothes, and metal and glass ornaments, were at first luxuries, but soon these luxuries grew into wants, and to balance the new expenditure the Reddi had to supplement his income either by increasing the output of his exchange goods or by selling his own labour. The attraction to follow the later course became tomany Reddis irresistible when the exploitation of the rich timber and bamboo growth in the hills flanking the Godavari offered unlimited employment to all men willing to engage in forest labour. Contact with other castes not only stimulated the growth of wants, but it brought the Reddi into close contact with new and more advanced methods of agriculture. Where the country lent itself to permanent cultivation particularly in the fertile, alluvial pockets of the Godavari valley, he began to plough with bullocks and to cultivate small areas of flat ground in addition to cutting *podu* on hill-slopes. Both regular forest labour and plough-cultivation on permanent fields fostered a greater stability of settlement. It led ultimately to the formation of the large villages on the Godavari bank, whose inhabitants are today only partly dependent on *podu* and wild jungle produce, and subsist to a very large extent on the provisions received from merchants in payment for their labours in the forest and on the yield of their plough-land.

When exactly the larger villages on the river came into being cannot be stated with certainty, but according to local tradition even fifty years ago Reddis, and in some instances Koyas and Kammars, were the sole inhabitants of such places as Kakishnur, Tekpalli and Katkur. At that time the majority of the Reddis are said to have lived in the interior of the hills, and settlements such as Kutturvada, Potmamidi, Uparapatla and Venchela, which are nowadays either reduced to two or three houses or entirely abandoned, consisted of a dozen or more households, scattered over the village-land in small groups. Even a quarter of a century ago G. E. C. Wakefield, the first European to visit the Reddis of the Samasthan, remarked on their independent savage habits and described them as " living in the heart of the jungle in single primitive huts situated

miles from one another, each hut containing one family only living on the products of the jungle, helped out with small patches of cultivation of a giant species of *jowari*."[1]

At first the Reddis' growing association with timber merchants and the development of plough-cultivation were probably interdependent processes. The merchants must have encouraged the Reddis of the hills to settle in the villages on the Godavari bank and to take to the plough, for thereby the restless hillmen were tied to one locality, and thus were assured a constant supply of forest labourers. Most of the new settlers depended for the supply of draft animals on the merchants, and when they received bullocks and buffaloes on credit, it was mainly for the purpose of transporting bamboos and timber from the interior to the river bank; but in the intervals of forest-labour they used the animals also for ploughing.

With the intensification of both forest-exploitation and plough-cultivation the interests of the two occupations began to conflict. An ever-growing demand for bamboo and timber on the Rajahmundry market called for increased output, and the merchants, whose hold over the Reddis had by this time become so firmly established that there was no longer any fear of large numbers absconding into the hills, began to view with disfavour the agricultural preoccupations of their employees. For the Reddis had proved successful plough-cultivators; they now owned level fields of considerable productivity and were unwilling to neglect them in order to supply the merchants with increasing quantities of bamboo and timber.

Yet, in spite of this conflict, many Reddis still carried on both occupations side by side; others relinquished cultivation altogether and relied entirely on work for wages, and a very few gave up forest-labour and returned to a purely agricultural economy.

This was roughly the development in the Godavari Region, where cheap transport renders forest exploitation particularly profitable. A parallel, though not in so advanced a stage, is to be found in certain parts of the Rampa Country. In the Northern Hills, however, where there is neither forest reservation nor forest exploitation, the infiltration of new economic methods followed different lines. We have already suggested in what way the system of feudal chiefs has there favoured the adoption of lowland custom and have cited instances of Reddis, who, following the lead of their *muttadar* have taken to cultivation with plough and bullocks (cf. p. 176).

In this area the Reddis have moreover learnt to grow fruit-trees such as orange and lime; the fruit, originally intended for domestic consumption, has proved an extremely valuable article for export, and in the season traders from the plains come to Reddis' villages and buy oranges at the rate of Rs. 5 per thousand. We have seen, however, that in recent

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

years many Reddis have been dispossessed of their fruit groves by immigrant Malas.

These developments, which form different aspects and phases of a general process of cultural change, are all closely interlinked; the relations between Reddis and merchants in Hyderabad can only be understood when we realize the changes which the collection of land-revenue and forest dues in cash has wrought in Reddi economy, and the manner in which revenue and dues were collected and the circumstances which led to the alienation of the aboriginals' land are not comprehensible unless we have a knowledge of the position occupied by the merchants. Since a separate chapter will have to be devoted to the relations between Reddis and merchants, I propose to deal first with the economic effects of the transition from *podu* to plough-cultivation, with the alienation of land from aboriginals, with the methods of revenue assessment and with the forest laws. The circumstances of the Reddis of Hyderabad will naturally form the main objects of our observation, but we will have occasion to draw comparisons with the conditions prevailing in the areas under British administration.

*Effects of Changes in Agricultural Methods.*

When turning from *podu* to plough-cultivation a Reddi relinquishes his traditional mode of life and ranges himself, at least economically, alongside his neighbours of other racial and cultural heritage. As a *podu* cutting hillman he occupies a position essentially different from that of the ordinary Telugu cultivator; as the owner of permanent fields he enjoys economic prospects similar to those of the lowlander and has become subject to the same economic needs.

Let us summarise the main factors of this change. The yield of the land that a man can cultivate with ploughs and bullocks is generally larger than that of a *podu* clearing worked by any single household. Larger harvests thus free the Reddi from the necessity of gathering wild jungle produce, and, in the absence of other adverse circumstances, allows him to raise his standard of living by exchanging surplus grain for merchandize formerly out of his reach. This is the attraction of plough-cultivation; but on the other hand he becomes burdened with a number of new responsibilities. To plough he must have cattle, and being hardly ever in the possession of sufficient money to purchase bullocks or buffaloes by cash-payment, he has to buy ploughing-cattle on credit or borrow a pair of bullocks against a share of the crop. Today there are Reddis who have inherited a sufficient stock of cattle to breed their own draught animals, but their number is small and the majority are always in difficulties over procuring or replacing bullocks for ploughing and manuring their fields.

Besides these investments the Reddi who has taken to ploughing must find the money for rent or land-revenue which in most areas is

considerably higher than that imposed on *podu*-cultivation. The various systems of assessment affecting the Reddis will presently be described in detail and we shall see that the necessity of raising the cash dues on his land is the main anxiety of the man with permanent fields and one that in some cases is great enough to induce Reddis to abandon their plough-land and return to the hills and to *podu*-cultivation. In Gogulapudi alone there were three men, Boli Kanaya (House 2), Boli Komaya (House 4), and Gurgunta Pandaya (House 6), who used to live in the valleys and cultivate with ploughs but had returned to *podu*-cutting as the easier mode of existence. Yet such a drastic step is not easily taken; once a sense of property and a taste for the more settled lowland life has softened the Reddi's nature, he hesitates to return to the harder, though more carefree life in the jungle. Change of residence is no longer a casual affair for now the Reddis must abandon possessions to which he has learnt to attach considerable value. Permanent cultivation ties the Reddi to the soil; it favours the growth of dependencies to which the mobile, *podu*-cutting hillman is seldom exposed.

All economic relations with outsiders are thus placed on a different basis. The Reddi of the hills, bartering his goods, his baskets and his jungle produce in the villages of the lowlands, or selling his surplus grain to an itinerant trader, may be cheated, but he will seldom be purposely led into large scale debt; he is too elusive and also too poor in seizable property to be considered a safe debtor. Not so the Reddi firmly established in an easily accessible lowland village, with land of his own and perhaps a few head of cattle. Any merchant will lend him money and advance him goods, for he knows that, in case the Reddi cannot pay the exorbitant interest, he can seize his cattle or plough-land, and probably realize a greater sum than that ever defaulted by his client. It is indeed only with the acquisition of marketable individual property, that the Reddi's lack of shrewdness in business transactions is turned to his grave disadvantage. As the owner of plough-land and in some cases of orange groves, he possesses for the first time in his history a commodity that arouses the covetousness of outsiders.

### *Land Alienation.*

We need not describe here in detail the various devices by which merchants, non-aboriginal cultivators, as well as non-Reddi *patel* and *patwari* dispossess the Reddi of plough land, groves of fruit trees, and anything else of value he may have acquired, but a few examples will illustrate the trend of events.

In the Godavari Region the land suitable for plough cultivation consists mainly of the alluvial soil at the mouth of small streams flowing into the Godavari. Most of these pockets harbour today permanent settlements, and it is here that the Reddis are largely engaged in plough-cultivation. Reddis, and in some villages, Reddis and Koyas, were until

about two generations ago the sole inhabitants and the exclusive owners of all the land. Nowadays, however, Telugu merchants from the lowlands below the gorges have settled in various villages and much good cultivable level land has passed from the aboriginals into their hands. Thus in Koinda, Tekur and Katkur considerable parts of the village land, and generally the best and most valuable fields, belong no longer to Reddis or Koyas, but to a few outsiders connected with the timber-trade. These merchants do not work their fields themselves, but employ Reddis and Koyas as farm-hands or hire out the fields to aboriginals, taking at harvest at least half the crop.

In some Godavari villages below the gorges, where a large influx of plains people followed the first settlements of merchants, the process has gone even further. In Kondamodalu, for instance, the original inhabitants were Reddis, Koyas and Kammars, but about forty years ago a merchant of Patro caste[1] from Vizagapatam settled in the village, and besides employing the aboriginals as forest-labourers, began acquiring their level fields. Only twelve or fourteen years ago several other merchants of the same caste arrived and managed to gain possession of more Reddi plough-land. Recently these men of Patro caste were joined by Kapu and Telaga cultivators from the delta region, who obtained from the zamindar[2] the land of all those Reddis and Koyas who were in arrear with their rents. Most Reddis and Koyas of Kondamodalu are thus thrown back on *podu*-cultivation, for which in this locality ample land is available. Today Kondamodalu gives one the impression of a Telugu village, and the Reddi houses with the exception of that of the Reddi headman, who alone of his people seems to have held his own and now lives in the style of a Telugu cultivator, are relegated to the outskirts of the settlement.

Similar conditions prevail in the Hyderabad villages on the fringe of the plains surrounding the hills south of the Godavari. In Anantavaram, for instance, a village between Ashwaraopet and Rudramkot, Reddis, Koyas and Kammars are the original inhabitants and form still the majority of the population. But two generations ago they lost part of their land to a group of Lambara settlers, and more recently other lands have been acquired by several families of Gaon toddy-drawers, Telaga cultivators, Waddars, Tsakals and Muslims. There are moreover three merchants of Komti caste in the village, one of whom arrived some years ago from Ashwaraopet and has since come into possession of nearly all the land that was then remaining to the Reddis and Koyas.[3]

The Reddis, whose houses stand in groups at a small distance from

1. These merchants from Vizagapatam, who style themselves Patros, are said to have sprung from the Erkala caste, which in Hyderabad and Madras Presidency is listed as a criminal tribe.

2. Kondamodalu belongs to the estate of the Maharaja of Pitapuram.

3. Six families of Gaons came 14 years ago from Tirmalpur, two Telaga families came 5 years ago from Dasaram, four Waddar families came 20 years ago from Ellore, 1 Tsakal family came 10 years ago from Kukunur, two Muslim families came 6 years ago from Tatkurgommu, and 3 Komti families came ten years ago from Ashwaraopet.

those of the other castes, live today in a state of abject poverty and their household goods are noticeably poorer than those found in the Godavari villages. They say that in their fathers' time they were much better off, for then they were free to cut *podu* in the nearby forest, and in addition possessed plenty of good plough-land and some cattle. 'But then the Komti came, and offered us money for our fields, and we had no sense and agreed to sell. But when the money was spent, we had no grain and had to borrow from the Komti; when we could not pay, he took away our cattle. Now we work for him, and he gives us scarcely enough to eat. But we are not allowed to cut *podu* and so there is nothing else to do.' A few Reddis have, however, managed to retain some plough-land, but without cattle they cannot manure it and complain that the soil is deteriorating. For ploughing they have to hire bullocks at a rate of about 85 seers of grain per pair, payable after the harvest. Those Reddis who have no fields work permanently for the Komti or for Lambaras. The former pays a man a monthly wage of two pots, about 28 seers of millet, while a wealthy Lambara, who grows tobacco on fields irrigated by a well, told me that he paid his Reddi labourers Rs. 3 a month. Neither provides the workers with food or even with a meal during the day. Sometimes a Reddi will enter into an agreement by which he cultivates a Lambara's land and takes one-third of the harvest while the owner, who pays the land revenue and provides the bullocks for ploughing, receives the remaining two-thirds.

Here, the Reddis have been reduced to the status of agricultural labourers and since no *podu* is allowed near these villages on the fringe of the plains, their economic situation compares unfavourably with that of the Reddis of Kondamodalu, who, although dispossessed of their plough land, are free to cut *podu* in a broad belt of unreserved forest. Considering their precarious condition, we may well ask, why none of them leaves Anantavaram and settles in the high hills of the nearby Polavaram Taluq, where the land still available for *podu* far exceeds the needs of the very scanty population. For in villages such as Uparpatla with three households new settlers could undoubtedly make a comfortable living. Yet none of the Reddis of Anantavaram avails himself of this opportunity, and it seems that long years of residence in the plains and economic dependency have broken their spirit and their self-reliance; although they yearn for their *podu*-fields, they dread the prospects of a life in the depth of the jungle, with none but themselves to depend on.

These examples render it, I think, quite clear that the adoption of plough-cultivation by no means always entails economic advantages and they may serve as a warning to those who believe that aboriginals can be benefited simply by being weaned from the axe and taught to plough. For once they have entered into competition with populations that possess experience of permanent cultivation and economic strife

accumulated through countless centuries, they are bound to lose sooner or later both their land and their independence, unless special and effective provision is made against such an eventuality.

The alienation of land from aboriginals to members of non-aboriginal castes has been the subject of legislation throughout India and today it is restricted both in the East Godavari District and in Hyderabad. In the former the Agency Land and Interest Transfer Act of 1917 prohibits the transfer of land from aboriginals to non-aboriginals except by special sanction of the Government Agent, and in Hyderabad similar provision has been made by the Land Alienation Act No. 3 of 1349 Fasli (1939-40) which has been promulgated in the jagirs[1] under the Court of Wards through circular order No. 9 of 1350 Fasli (1940-41) and thus applies now also to the Samasthan of Paloncha.

It is too early to judge to what an extent these Acts will arrest the transfer of aboriginal land to outsiders in Hyderabad, but their enforcement will certainly not be easy. According to the present system of rural administration, known as the *watandari* system, the registration of land is largely the responsibility of the hereditary village-accountants or *patwari* who are invariably non-aboriginals, and in backward tracts rarely visited by higher officers the *patwari* have many ways of influencing the transfer of land. Experience in the Reddi villages on the Godavari shows that a large amount of Reddi plough-land has in recent years passed into the hands of the non-aboriginal non-resident *patwari* and members of his family, or other persons of affluence who have been able to insinuate their claims. In the East Godavari District, where the restrictions on the transfer of aboriginal land have been in force for almost a quarter of century, their effectiveness is apparently far from satisfactory, and the District Officers with whom I discussed the subject said that there too they experienced great difficulties in controlling the dealings of the *patwari* and that many ways have been found to circumvent the provisions of the Act.[2] Even in Rampa village, one mile from the tahsil headquarters of the Chodavaram Taluq the Reddis have mortgaged all their plough-land to outsiders, and are now cultivating it for their creditors, sharing the crops after harvest.[3]

In the Chodavaram Taluq a special problem has been created by the influx of Malas or Valmikis from the lowlands, who have gained

1. Estates bestowed by H.E.H. the Nizam or former rulers on individuals and not under the administration of the Government.

2. This is borne out by a remark on land-alienation in the 1935 supplement to the Gazetteer for the East Godavari District: "though legally the Koya cannot alienate his lands to persons of other communities, a good deal of clandestine alienation is said to go on." (p. 209). The same applies undoubtedly to Reddis.

3. Comment on this practice is contained in a report by W. R. S. Sathianathan, I.C.S., Agent to the Government of Madras, East Godavari: "Act I of 1917 no doubt prevents the plainsmen from obtaining the lands of hillmen but it cannot prevent them from carrying away the agricultural produce of the hillmen. The provisions of Act I of 1917 too are easily evaded in Zamindari villages. The lands are simply relinquished by the hillmen and they are assigned to the plainsmen." Government of Madras Public (Political) Department G. O. No. 2028, 17th September 1941.

possession of many of the Reddis' groves of orange and other fruit trees. This is a clear case of land alienation, but the provision of the 1917 Act cannot be applied since that particular group of Malas, although they admittedly immigrated from the lowlands of Vizagapatam and the lowlands near Rajahmundry after the Rampa Rebellion and are in their habits and style of life evidently plains people, call themselves Konda Malas and are listed as a hill-tribe. Thus the transfer of land from a Reddi to a Mala trader passes as a transaction between 'aboriginals' and does not fall under the provisions of the Act; a situation which is openly deplored by the local officials.[1]

### *Land Revenue and Forest Regulations.*

The most powerful single factor among the cases of change in Reddi economy was the imposition of cash assessment on the land. Tributes in kind were probably levied for a long time by various local rulers, but they cannot have amounted to regular payments and the Reddis in the interior of the hills produced so little of value that the collection of tribute among them can hardly have been worth the effort.

A description of the various land revenue systems which were in force in the Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli Taluqs before 1868, is given by C. L. Glasfurd,[2] and since both these taluqs belonged to the estate of the Raja of Paloncha, we are justified in assuming that very similar conditions must also have prevailed in the country on the right bank of the Godavari. After describing the more progressive parts of the Bhadrachalam Taluq, Glasfurd refers to the villages in the interior as follows: "The third chuk[3] consists of the remainder of the villages of the talook, 73 in number, situated in the interior, where the soil is poor, and the cultivators all of the Koy race; and only scanty crops of rice, maize, sawa, and mountain jowaree are raised. These villages previous to the cession paid no revenue, neither in cash nor in kind, but the proprietors used to receive from them "Vettee" or gratuitous menial service in lieu thereof. This service was performed in turns, a certain number of the villagers being always present in attendance on their pro-

1. A close parallel to the position of the Malas among the Hill Reddis is that of the Panos among the Khonds and Savaras of Orissa, which the *Report of the Partially Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee* (Cuttack, 1940, p. 93) describes as follows: "It is generally felt that the Panos are not an aboriginal race. They properly fall under the depressed classes. They are Oriyas though they have lived for generations in the hills. They accompany hillmen to courts and help them in deciding their boundary disputes and have considerable influence over the home-loving Khonds. They trade upon the ignorance and credulity of hillmen. As per rules made under the Agency Tracts Interest and Land Transfer Act (Act I of 1917), Madras, they are considered as aboriginal tribe along with the Khonds and Savaras. Thus there is no restriction to the transfer of land from Khonds and Savaras to Panos. They are a very intelligent and petty trading class and being in close contact with Khonds and Savaras are the greatest exploiters of them. The Committee is firmly of opinion that they are people from the plains who have migrated to the hills in not very distant times and that they are not an aboriginal tribe but a non-hill tribe or rather caste."

2. *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Upper Godavary District, Central Provinces*, Nagpur, 1869, pp. 59, 60.

3. Division.

prietors to cut firewood, fetch water, sweep, and carry loads; and when they or their families or servants had to travel, these villagers were obliged to carry their baggage." The Rekapalli Taluq was also divided into the open country, where assessment in money was possible, and the backward areas; of the latter Glasfurd writes: "The third chuk consists of 12 villages situated in the interior; they are similar in all essential particulars to the villages of the third chuk of the Bhadrachellum cum Mureegoodium talook, and previous to the cession were held on the same terms of gratuitious service. The fourth chuk consists of 35 villages, which are situated on the spurs and the valleys of the Eastern Ghats. It has been found necessary to form these villages into a separate chuk, for the people are if anything more uncivilized than those of the third chuk. The cultivation is restricted almost entirely to "Dhya" or "Pord" (*podu*) and the crops are very much exposed to the ravages of wild animals. These villages formerly paid only a portion of the land revenue in kind; the rest used to be given in matting, jungle products, fruits, parrots, and hill minas."

To pay the tribute to their overlord in captured birds was undoubtedly more congenial to the Reddi,[1] than the present system of cash payments, and the introduction of assessment in money at the end of the last century must have had a revolutionary effect on Reddi economics. Unlike other cultural changes, which took a gradual course those introduced by Government were enforced from one day to another. Previously the Reddis' economic transactions were almost entirely based on barter, and money had probably only very occasionally passed through their hands, but with the introduction of cash assessment money became a necessity for every household.

The present systems of assessment are very different in the various administrative units, and no exhaustive survey can here be attempted. Until 1937 the Reddis of Hyderabad stood under the administration of the Rajas of Paloncha, but since the Court of Wards took over control of the Samasthan of Paloncha the system of administration has undergone considerable change and I propose to describe here the system of assessment in force during my first stay among the Reddis, *i.e.*, in 1940 and 1941.

The underlying principle was assessment of revenue in proportion to the area cultivated by each householder; consequently the assessment was collected, at least in theory, from the individual Reddi and never from the community as a whole.

The annual assessment on *podu*-fields was Re. 1 per *biga*[2], on permanent dry fields Re. 1 per *biga*, and on semi-wet rice fields Rs. 3. From

1. When we hear that during the first half of the nineteenth century the *mansabdar* of Rampa receive Rs. 8,750 annually from the *muttadar* of his estate, the largest part of this sum must have been raised in the villages of the open country, and it is doubtful whether the Reddis in the remote hill *mutta* paid tribute in cash even at this comparatively late period.

3. A *biga* is in Hyderabad approximately 4/5 of an acre.

all those occupied in plough-cultivation the Forest Department collected moreover a fee of Rs. 3 per plough, and from owners of cattle a grazing fee of As. 8 per buffalo and As. 4 per bull or cow. If a Reddi had no cultivation, however, he had to pay Re. 1 fee per house. Besides these legal dues there existed a number of customary fees levied by the *patwari* and the forest subordinates. If a Reddi wanted to give up his old *podu* and cut a new one, which occurs as a rule every two years, he was supposed to hand a written application to the *patwari* and this had generally to be accompanied by a gratification of Re. 1. Again when the *patwari* measured the new *podu* in order to assess the revenue he demanded once more Re. 1 or provisions of similar value. Frequently the *patwari* assessed the revenue at their discretion and Reddis paying Rs. 4 to Rs. 6[1] for a *podu*-field and Rs. 12 to Rs. 15 for dry land of not more than 3 or 4 acres were by no means rare; the Reddis' ignorance both as to the size of a *biga* and even the simplest calculation prevented them from realizing that these rates stood in no proportion to the area under cultivation, and were entirely illegitimate.

Sometimes the *patwari* used arbitrary over-assessment as a device for gaining possession of Reddi land. If the owner was incapable of paying the exorbitant rate, the *patwari* offered to pay the money himself and to take over the land until such a time as the Reddi would be able to raise the sum; it goes without saying that the owner had little chance of regaining his land, and many fields in Reddi villages belong now to the *patwari's* family. We shall see in the next chapter that when a Reddi was employed by a timber merchant, the *patwari* often collected the revenue direct from his master, who then debited the Reddi's account without his even knowing how much had been paid in his name. Plough-fees and grazing-fees were collected by the forest-guards and these again demanded some extra gratification, which amounted generally to between ten and twenty seers of grain per plough.

Closely linked with the question of revenue-collection is that of the forest laws, and it will therefore be convenient to discuss the two problems together. In the Samasthan of Paloncha the greater part of the forest had been reserved and a line, drawn at some distance from each village, demarcated the area within which the Reddis were allowed to cut *podu*. In the villages on the Godavari this line included as a rule only the slopes immediately surrounding the village, and the Reddis complained that the area at their disposal was so small that they would be unable to allow the jungle to grow to a sufficient height after each felling, before taking it again under cultivation. The demarcation had only been carried out three years before my first visit, however, and in most villages there was still sufficient jungle of fair growth for two or

1. The average size of a *podu*-field is, as we have seen, about 1½ to 2½ *biga* per household, and with the Reddis methods of agriculture it would be physically impossible for a family to cultivate an area of 6 *biga*.

three changes of *podu*-fields before shortage of land would have become acute.

More noticeable at that time were the restrictions imposed on the use of bamboo and timber for domestic purposes, and many Reddi houses were in a bad state of repair. The Reddis had to apply to the Forest Ranger for permission to fell wood for house-building, and this regulation, as well as alleged encroachments on protected trees, was used by the forest subordinates to levy further gratifications ranging from Re. 1 to Rs. 5 according to the means of the householder. It was similarly an established custom that at weddings a fee had to be paid to the forest guard for his permission to take wood for the marriage booth.

In the remoter villages of the hills, which were rarely visited by subordinates, the Reddis had naturally far more freedom both in the cutting of *podu* and in the use of forest produce, and those of villages like Gogulapudi satisfied the forest guard with an annual gratification without paying much heed to the varieties of trees they felled. We have mentioned already that the Reddis of Hyderabad have no right of chase, but in the interior of the hills the Reddis nevertheless hunted with little risk of detection.

Turning to the systems of revenue-assessment in the East Godavari District, we find a considerable diversity, which is due to the distribution of Reddis over *ryotwari* villages, *zamindari* estates, and hill-*mutta*. A few examples will demonstrate the general principles. Opposite Kakishnur lies the village of Tumileru, which comprises thirty Reddi households and has a fairly large area of land under plough cultivation. The collective assessment on this flat land is Rs. 200 and it is left to the villagers to share amongst themselves the land and the revenue. At some distance a line including the near hill-slopes is drawn round the village, and *podu*-fields lying within this area are free of assessment. Between this line and the boundary of the reserved forest lies a broad belt, in which the Reddis may cut *podu*-fields without special permission and for these they pay As. 8 per acre. They are moreover allowed to take timber for domestic purposes from the forest within this belt. There are no other dues imposed on the people of Tumileru, except a fee of As. 4 for muzzle-loader licences, and hunting is free within and without the reserved forest. Since the Reddi headman himself makes the payment in the tahsil office there is little opportunity for the levying of illegal fees by *patwari*.

Not in all villages, however, is the land assessed on a collective basis, and where assessment is individual, as for instance, in the case of Kondamodalu, which we have already quoted in another context, there is always the possibility of the alienation of land and illegitimate over assessment.

Still another system prevails in the hill-*mutta* of the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills. Here the *muttadar* pays to Government a very

moderate fixed tribute (*peshkhash*) and collects from his subjects an annual "house-tax," which varies between Re. 1 and Rs. 1-4-0; this is the only due that the Reddis have to pay. The "house-tax" is paid direct by the village-headmen to the *muttadar* and by the *muttadar* to the tahsildar; no subordinates stand between the Reddi and Government, and there occurs therefore no opportunity of levying other fees or contributions in kind.

*Podu*-cutting and the use of forest-produce is unrestricted throughout the Northern Hills, and the recent reservation of certain blocks of forest in the Rampa Country does not as yet seem to have caused serious inconvenience to the local Reddis, though the introduction of forest conservancy is not viewed with favour by either *muttadar* or Reddis. In the hills of Polavaram Taluq *podu*-cutting is still widely practised, and the Reddis are allowed to use timber and forest produce for domestic purposes and the manufacture of baskets free of charge.

While forest-conservancy has curtailed, at least in some areas, the Reddi's freedom to follow his traditional occupations of *podu* cultivation and bartering of forest produce, the assessment of Government dues in cash has introduced a new element into Reddi economics; except in the *mutta* villages of Chodavaram and Ellavaram, where the rates are hardly more than nominal, the necessity of finding money for cash payments has compelled the Reddi to seek new sources of income. Among them forest labour ranks first, and we will see in the next chapter how work in the employ of timber-merchants has revolutionised Reddi economy in most of the villages in the Godavari valley.

## CHAPTER XIV

# RELATIONS WITH MERCHANTS

THE problems arising from the break-up of a self-sufficient economy and the subjection to a system of administration, revenue-collection and forest-conservancy ill-suited to the needs of aboriginals, are not peculiar to the Reddis of Hyderabad. Few of the tribal populations of Peninsular India have been spared this painful process of transition, accompanied only too often by the loss of their land and their economic freedom. But the state of far-reaching dependence on individual forest-contractors and merchants, which prevailed among the Godavari Reddis for at least two generations and has only recently come to an end, was a phenomenon of less usual occurrence.

We have already outlined the process by which the Reddis of the Godavari Region were brought under the influence of merchants from the lowlands, who exploited the rich growth of timber and bamboo on the hills flanking the river. This association, which from the first necessitated a considerable readjustment of Reddi economy, affected with the deepening of contacts, their whole life, and the economic, sociological and psychological gulf which divides the Reddis of the hills from those of the river bank is directly traceable to the latters' subservience to their employers.

### *Forest Labour*

Unlike the trader who buys the cultivators' produce and in turn sells them goods, the timber-merchant purchases nothing from the Reddis that they produce or possess but hires their labour for the felling of bamboo and timber to which he has obtained a title either from Government or the estate owners, who in modern times exercise rights over the forest. The Reddis in these areas have thus become the employees of the merchants. They are paid by piece-work, remuneration being calculated according to the quantity of timber and bamboo felled and delivered to the river bank and not on the basis of a daily wage. At first sight this appears to be fairly satisfactory, for it seems to allow the Reddi to work in the forest at his convenience and so to provide himself with a new source of income without interfering unduly with his agricultural activities. In point of fact, however, he is often subjected to a good deal of pressure from his employers whenever the deliveries of bamboo and timber do not satisfy their requirements.

To protect the aboriginals against unfair treatment by timber con-

tractors administrative measures have been designed both in the East Godavari District and in the Paloncha Samasthan; in the former regulations regarding the payment of wages have been in force for a number of years and have on the whole had tolerably good results. In Paloncha, on the other hand, similar rules were only introduced in 1941, and when I arrived in the Reddi country I found it dominated by a clique of timber-merchants whose dealings with the Reddis were subject to no control on the part of the Samasthan Authorities.

The exploitation of the forest growth in the hills from Parantapalli up to Katkur was at that time in the hands of several petty merchants who lived in Reddi villages, and one big timber contractor, who resided in British territory near Kunavaram and who commissioned a number of agents to supervise the work. Each merchant employed a definite number of Reddis, but while whole villages worked permanently for the principal contractor, the petty merchants could only muster ten or twenty labourers in some of the settlements. Nominally all the merchants paid their men at the same rate: Rs. 2 for felling 100 bamboos and transporting them to the river bank, and Rs. 2-8-0 for felling and transporting 10 trees of a certain girth.

If payment had actually been made according to these rates, the Reddis working for forest contractors would have had an income enabling them to pay their revenue, satisfy their needs in clothing and household goods, and supplement their store of food in times of shortage. For on an average a man brings 20-25 bamboos from the forest daily, and allowing for the days which he spends on his fields, he can comfortably supply 3,000 bamboos a year, an output which represents an income of Rs. 60. Those men who own no fields and therefore devote their whole energies to forest labour, possess a far higher earning capacity, which should enable them to support their families entirely on the proceeds of their labour.

In practice, however, the merchants paid only a fraction of the fixed rates, and the majority of the Reddis' earnings were withheld on the pretext of old debts and the interest accruing. Moreover the merchants took advantage of the Reddis' inability to make any but the simplest calculations or check up on any transaction, and despite deliveries of large quantities of bamboos and timber the burden of indebtedness increased rather than decreased. A few examples will serve to demonstrate the discrepancy between the nominal rates of pay and the actual earnings of the Reddis.

In the year 1939-40 the principal contractor exported from the two villages of Parantapalli and Kakishnur 78,000 bamboos and 5,250 trees which represented the year's labour of 42 men of these two settlements. Consequently he should have paid out wages totalling Rs. 2,622. Actually he distributed provisions, consisting of millet, rice, salt, chillies, dried fish, sugar and tobacco to the value of Rs. 523-8-0; in addition

he gave each man a dhoti worth Re. 1-4-0 and one sari worth Rs. 2-0-0, and paid the land revenue for his employees, which in these two villages, where cultivation had become almost a secondary occupation, amounted to less than Rs. 200 including all irregular fees to the *patwari*. Thus during one year 42 Reddis received the value of approximately Rs. 860 instead of Rs. 2,622, to which we may perhaps add Rs. 200 as exceptional payments to meet the costs of weddings and of fines imposed by village-*panchayat* or subordinate officials.

This calculation coincides roughly with my experience that a man received on an average one half to three quarters of a seer (*i.e.*, 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds) of millet a day, or the corresponding value of about one anna.[1] When I arrived in Parantapalli at the end of October, each of the twelve men working for the contractor in question had received Rs. 4 worth of millet and a small quantity of salt and tobacco since the beginning of the rains (*i.e.*, since the middle of June): they for their part had in this period, which is considered the most unfavourable for bamboo cutting, delivered 10,000 bamboos. Since work in the forest had forced them to neglect their fields the small millets had yielded a poor harvest and they subsisted mainly on the powdered pith of caryota palm and complained that they had not even sufficient salt and chillies. Yet these twelve men of Parantapalli owed their employer according to his accounts a total sum of Rs. 1,100.

How is it, one may well ask, that men with as low a standard of life as the Reddis are so heavily indebted to their employers, for whom they work for the larger part of the year? Marriage expenses of up to Rs. 30 and occasional fines that necessitate a cash loan are no real explanation, and there can be little doubt that the merchants had brought about this state of indebtedness artificially and for the sole purpose of strengthening their influence and power over the labourers. The ways in which a merchant could fabricate a debt, which on paper seemed unassailable, were numerous. Since he did not give the Reddis receipts for the bamboo and timber delivered, he could credit their accounts with smaller sums than those actually due for their work. On the other hand he made the Reddis acknowledge by thumb impression the receipt of all provisions and occasional cash loans. Once a man had contracted such a debt the merchant compelled him, under the threat of withholding all grain and food-stuffs, to give subsequently similar bonds for the accruing interest of 100 per cent. per annum. Another way in which Reddis were drawn into a growing dependence was the merchants' habit of lending them bullocks for transporting bamboo and timber from the forest to the river bank. This loan of draught animals no doubt greatly facilitated the Reddis' work of transport, but it also served the interests of the merchants by increasing the deliveries of bamboo and timber. The merchants, however, held the Reddis

1. In the Godavari valley the market price of millet varied then between 14 to 18 seers for Re. 1.

liable for the loss or the maiming of the animals, which on the rocky jungle paths was an all too frequent occurrence.

It must not be imagined that the merchants ever expected full liquidation of such debts; they looked on them as a convenient means of securing Reddi labour at a daily wage of about one anna. For the debtor, unless prepared to emigrate, had little choice but to continue working for his employer in order to pay his land revenue and to obtain the meagre supply of imported provisions, which for most Reddis in the Godavari villages have become a necessity. Even in villages where there was ample cultivable flat land the necessity of paying land revenue in money coupled with the absence of an open market for the disposal of agricultural produce, gave the merchants a firm hold over the Reddis. In Koinda, for instance, the Reddis and Koyas had excellent flat fields and should have been prosperous enough, if they had relied only on cultivation. Yet they worked in the forest throughout the year and even of those crops which they were able to raise they had to hand over a large part to their merchant, who paid their land revenue direct to the *patwari*. Consequently there was a chronic shortage of grain and every year the aboriginals were thrown back on the millet the merchants paid for forest labour.

Though in some villages there were several merchants the Reddis did not benefit very much from the competition for forest labourers. Notwithstanding frequent attempts to entice the Reddis of rival contractors into their own employ, the merchants were careful not to undermine the very basis of their influence, namely; the sanctity of obligations accruing from paper debts. Thus a Reddi had little possibility of extricating himself from his bondage by seeking employment with another merchant, for his former master would only release him on condition that the new employer paid up his debt in full and when such a transaction was accomplished the Reddi, who had then to acknowledge the ceded debt by thumb impression, found himself in much the same position as before. Nevertheless transactions of this kind were sometimes undertaken, though seldom on the initiative of the Reddis concerned. In Tekpalli, for instance, half of the Reddis used to work for a big forest contractor of Vaddigudem and the other half for a minor merchant, who resided in Koinda. Some time ago the former wanted to take over the Reddis working for the Koinda merchant, and with the help of an influential land-owner of Rudramkot an agreement was reached according to which the Vaddigudem contractor was to pay the Koinda merchant Rs. 4,000 and acquire thereby the right to employ the whole population of Tekpalli. When I visited Koinda the minor merchant complained bitterly that though his men were already working for the Vaddigudem merchant, he had not yet received the Rs. 4,000, whereas the mediator in the negotiations had already been paid his commission of Rs. 1,000.

This incident renders it quite clear that the merchants regarded the Reddis as their personal property and an article of trade; it also reveals how great an asset the labourers are considered by their employers, when the profits gained through the employment of about thirty-five men can justify an outlay of Rs. 5,000.

Most Reddis of the river bank villages were so enmeshed in the net of their obligations that they could seldom muster the courage to break the chains of their dependence. Now and then a Reddi would refuse to work any longer for his master or declared himself unwilling to pay off a debt inherited from his father. In such a case the merchant was accustomed, either acting on his own or backed by a police constable, to seize, with the help of Madigas and men in his employ, any movable property such as ornaments or cattle, which the defaulter happened to possess. If the Reddi owned permanent fields of any value his former master would claim them in payment for the alleged debt, and thanks to the close relations between *patwari* and merchant there was little difficulty in obtaining a legal transfer. In this manner a great deal of Reddi and Koya land has passed into the hands of both resident and non-resident timber merchants.

A dispute over fields that occurred recently in Borreddigudem near Tekur may illustrate this practice. Some Reddis of Borreddigudem used to work for a merchant from Rajahmundry, but when a number of years ago he gave up his business in Tekur, his cousin, took over his employees and paid him Rs. 350 in compensation of debts owed by the Reddis. The new contractor secured a bond for Rs. 350 from Kechel Lachmaya, the headman and *pujari* of Borreddigudem, and during the following years this debt increased, according to the merchant's accounts to Rs. 600, partly owing to interest accruing and partly to alleged advances of grain and provisions that were not completely offset by deliveries of bamboos. When the headman died the merchant pressed his son, Kechel Ramaya, for complete liquidation of the debt, and since Ramaya was quite unable to pay, his creditor enlisted the help of a police constable and seized five buffaloes and six bulls in part payment, and in addition took over a field belonging to Kechel Ramaya and another belonging to his brother-in-law Kalagula Ramaya. For several years the merchant cultivated these fields and all attempts of the Reddis to regain their hereditary land were frustrated. It was only when the Land Alienation Act, referred to in the preceding chapter, was promulgated in the Paloncha Samasthan that they forestalled the merchant in cultivating one of the fields, on which he threatened them with prosecution. This case, brought to the notice of the Authorities through my enquiries, was ultimately decided in favour of the Reddis, but many instances of land alienation have passed unnoticed.

Those Reddis who had little seizable property found it easier to escape from the grip of an oppressive employer; they emigrated to

villages on the British side of the Godavari, or they settled in the hills either within the frontiers of Hyderabad, or across the border in the Polavaram Taluq. Emigration as an escape from oppression has been practised on a fairly large scale in recent years, and some villages, as for instance Jidugumma, are now deserted, while others have lost an appreciable part of their inhabitants. Borreddigudem, for instance, which two years previously had consisted of thirty houses, contained at the time of my visit only nineteen, and some of the remaining families told me that, hard pressed by the merchants and restricted in the cutting of *podu* and the use of jungle produce, they too were prepared to emigrate.

### *Psychological Effect.*

The economic power of the timber-merchants has not failed to exert a profound psychological effect on the Reddis. In the old times the cloak of outside authority lay lightly on their shoulders and even among themselves there was equality of all tribesmen: the headmen never ruled their co-villagers, but were only the spokesmen and representatives of an intensely democratic community. The gradual extension of the Samasthan administration over the Reddi country is not likely to have brought about a radical change in this situation, for though the Reddis had then to recognize the authority of an outside power and had to yield to the demand for revenue the Raja's officials interfered only occasionally in the internal affairs of the aboriginals and their visits were fleeting and spaced out over long periods. With the coming of the merchants, the development of the bamboo and timber trade and the rapid growth of their hold over the Reddis, a new element entered the sphere of village-life. For the merchants or their agents were ever present in the villages and encroached on the personal liberty of their labourers to a far greater extent than the administration had ever attempted. The Reddi in debt to the merchant suddenly found himself no longer master of his own destiny, or safe in the possession of his property. He had to work in the forest, not only when he was free from agricultural work, but whenever his employer demanded his services, and he knew that non-compliance with the merchant's wishes not only jeopardized his property in cattle and land, but endangered the small supply of grain he hoped to receive for past deliveries of bamboo and timber. Large-scale resistance to the ever-increasing power of the merchants was rendered impracticable by the absence of any organization among the Godavari Reddis which might have united them in a common front, and in this respect they differed very noticeably from their kinsmen in Rampa who under the leadership of hereditary *muttadar* took to revolt, when oppression and exploitation seemed no longer bearable (cf. pp. 31, 32). Experience had taught the Reddis that the power of the State, as embodied in the Raja's subordinate officials, sided with the rich and that there was no appeal against a grievance or injury.

The merchants were paramount in the country, and deep down in the minds of the Reddis and Koyas, lay the generation old conviction that their position was unassailable. Their fathers had suffered the bondage into which they themselves had been born, and, filled with a hopelessness that no longer looked for freedom, they faced the world with an attitude of sullen resignation, mixed with latent hate and fear. " What can we do?" I often heard them say, " we know that until our death we will have to work for the merchants. They alone are powerful in our country. If we refuse to work for them they beat us, and tell the forest guard to go to our village and fine us for taking wood from the forest; then the forest guard will sit in our village and eat our chickens till at last we run to the merchant and beg him to pay the fine to the forest guard. So we can never get away from the merchants."

Exploitation and oppression of aboriginals by merchants and money-lenders is not confined to the Reddi country. D. Symington, I.C.S., in his *Report on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes of the Partially Excluded Areas in the Province of Bombay*[1] has recently given a graphic description of the relations between Bhils and merchants (sowcars), which reveals conditions so similar to those prevailing among the Reddis, that a full quotation will not be out of place:

> " It is amazing how helpless the Bhil is in the face of outrageous injustice, and not only helpless but careless and almost complaisant. From beyond the memory of living man he has lived on a bare subsistence, and he is now prepared to put up with almost anything provided the sowcar continues to support him with doles. He is too ignorant and poor to avail himself of legal redress, and he can be certain that none of his neighbours will have the courage either to help him to resist on the spot the extortions of the sowcar and his agents, or to give evidence in court of what occurs. Moreover the sowcar is often able to corrupt officials of all departments. The Bhil is therefore in a hopeless position if he tries to invoke the law. What is more surprising is that he does not protect himself by extra legal methods. It would be natural to expect that such a state of affairs would produce an annual crop of murders and woundings. But such is not the case. A large deputation of Bhils from a village in Taloda taluka complained to me of the *zulum* committed by the sowcars and their Pathans. I asked them if they allowed tigers too to enter their village and to do harm with impunity, and they said no. When asked why they did not treat the Pathans like tigers, the idea seemed novel and they said they would do so provided I gave the order!
>
> The fact is that since one and all are dependent on the sowcars they cannot afford to antagonize them. Moreover the Bhils in these areas are as will be shown later extremely law-abiding, peaceful and averse from violence. From the sowcar's point of view they are ideal customers..
>
> Sowcars regularly employ Pathans, Bhayyas or other bullies to terrorize the Bhil into meekness. They perform such tasks as removing the produce from the field or the threshing-floor; and catching a recalcitrant

1. Bombay, 1939, pp. 12-13.

> Bhil in his village, or more often when he visits the market town, and bringing him to the sowcar's place where he may be kept in wrongful confinement for hours or days until he does what is wanted of him. The Pathan does not hesitate to use physical violence when performing his duties. Instances of assaults, beatings, and hurt are of such constant occurrence that they do not arouse much comment locally unless unusual brutality has occurred.
>
> The sowcar insists on the Bhil assuming responsibility for the debts of his deceased father, uncles or other relations, although he is not legally liable for them. This is done by intimidating or forcing him to execute a fresh promissory note in respect of these sums.
>
> The sowcar will resort to trickery to prevent the Bhil putting in an appearance in the Civil Court as defendant in his suit. He can frequently prevent the summons being served on the defendant, since the court bailiffs like most other subordinate officials, are often in his pay."

As in the Partially Excluded Areas of the Bombay Presidency referred to by Symington, collusion between the affluent merchants and low-salaried subordinates was also in the Paloncha Samasthan one of the main difficulties of the Reddis who found no protection from the terrorization and physical violence of their employers. Another evil was the habit of *patel, patwari* and forest officers of collecting the Reddis' revenue and forest-dues direct from their masters, who kept the receipts and debited the payments to the Reddis' accounts. Consequently the Reddis could not check the amount paid out in their name and were often even unaware of the assessment which was demanded. More than once a man was pressed for arrears of land revenue which he believed had long been paid by the merchant on his behalf.

Recognizing the omnipotence of the merchants some Reddis found it convenient to subscribe to the cause of their employers and, to the great discomfort of their fellows, turned the situation to their own advantage. They became the merchants' agents and informers within their own villages and counteracted slackness or opposition on the part of their own tribesmen by secret reports to their employers. Backed by the merchants these men, though more feared than respected by other Reddis, became the real power in village life and often entirely eclipsed the authority of the hereditary headmen. In a small firmly welded Reddi community in the hills so unsocial a behaviour would be well nigh unthinkable, but years of subjection to an agency unconcerned with the social well-being of the tribe has weakened the community spirit of villagers and fostered the egoism of the individual. The sociological composition of the river-bank villages, where families from various hill villages, unconnected by ties of blood or marriage have congregated certainly favoured such a development; yet without the example of the merchants' tyranny it is unlikely that Reddis would have adopted so ruthless an attitude towards their own tribesmen as that evinced by some of the merchants' agents.

The murder cases quoted in Chapter X are proof of the wedge

which the merchants' influence has driven into Reddi society. It is noticeable that in these cases the victim was generally reputed to have stood in opposition to the merchants, while the murderers were men who had enjoyed their favour. The Reddis' apathy and apparent indifference to these deeds, and their failure to institute *panchayat* proceedings against the self-avowed culprits, are only explicable in the light of a deep-seated conviction that not only were the merchants themselves all powerful, but that their protection extended the same immunity from prosecution to those Reddis associated with their cause.

Recent reforms in the Administration of the Samasthan on the one hand, and the success of the co-operative enterprise under the guidance of the Swami of Parantapalli on the other, have greatly reduced the influence of forest contractors, and have done a good deal to dispel the unhealthy social atmosphere that prevailed in some of the villages on the river-bank. A wave of relief swept over the Reddi country at the promulgation of the new rules, which provided for official supervision of the payment of wages by contractors to forest labourers, and for the exclusion of the most powerful timber-merchant from the exploitation of the Samasthan forests. A new situation had arisen: the merchants who had for decades reigned supreme, had at last come up against a force stronger than they themselves, and had suffered an unmistakable reverse. The application of the Hyderabad Bhagela[1] Agreements Regulation of 1936 with its provision for the termination of the debts of bond-serfs at the expiry of one year gave birth to new hope in the aboriginals' hearts, for by law they could no longer be forced to work in the forest at all times of the year. Though the rules were only promulgated in July 1941, the greater energy devoted to cultivation during the rains had already produced results. For in October of the same year many Reddis from the Godavari valley came to me with stories of how, notwithstanding the weak monsoon, their crops promised a better harvest than they had done for years. Many said that having once experienced what it meant to be under the yoke of timber-contractors and being miraculously delivered of their burden, they would be careful never again to fall into the clutches of new merchants.

We will see in Chapter XV how this favourable position has been employed by the Swami of Parantapalli to oust the influence of the merchants and replace them by a co-operative organization run for the benefit of the Reddis.

### *Conditions in the East Godavari District*

Control over the timber-contractors' dealings with the Reddis, similar to that which was recently instituted in the Samasthan of Paloncha, has existed in the East Godavari District for many years, and

1. *Bhagela* is the Hyderabad term for 'bond-serf' and is synonymous with the term *dholi* used in Orissa.

has undoubtedly gone a far way to protect the Reddis from exploitation by their employers. Wages are mainly paid in cash, and the fact that forest coupes are annually auctioned and a contractor has therefore no guarantee that he will not be ousted from an area in the following year prevents the Reddis from being drawn into too great a dependence on any one merchant; for in their own interests contractors are unlikely to give the Reddis loans that can only be worked off over a period of many years. Moreover, a clause in every contract[1] regulating the payment of wages, arms the Reddis with a weapon of redress against unfair dealings of contractors. Nevertheless it appears that except in the most flagrant cases of exploitation this clause is rarely invoked and we would deceive ourselves if we assumed that rules and regulations alone can effectively safeguard the interests of aboriginal labourers as long as they have to deal with individual contractors.

A problem altogether different from the relations between Reddis and timber contractors, is the relation between the Reddis of the Northern Hills and the itinerant traders of Mala caste. The economic and social position of these Malas *vis-à-vis* the Reddis has already been discussed in some detail in Chapter XI, where we have seen how the Mala traders succeed not only in gaining the upper hand over the simple-minded Reddis by lending them money at high interest, but also in appropriating to their own use many of the Reddis' valuable fruit groves. It is not, however, only the Malas, whom these fruit groves attract but other merchants from the lowlands. When the oranges and limes ripen, they bring their carts as far as Boduluru and buy the fruit while it is still on the trees, paying the Reddis only a fraction of the market-price at Rajahmundry. Sometimes merchants induce the Reddis to mortgage the entire output of their gardens for a period of several years against loans, and owing to the Reddis' general improvidence in business transactions they often find it difficult to regain the usufruct of their gardens, although the Agency Land and Interest Transfer Act of 1917 impedes the legal transfer of gardens to non-aboriginals.

Most Reddis in the Rampa Country have their standing connection with merchants to whom they sell not only fruit but also minor forest produce, soapnuts and tamarinds. In the report quoted above W. R. S. Sathianathan, I.C.S., describes these relations between aboriginals and plains merchants as follows: "The hillmen are exploited by the sowcars from the plains. They are not getting proper value for their hill produce such as tamarind, soapnut and honey. The sowcars advance petty sums to the hillmen and recover double the amount in

1. "The contractor shall not be allowed to transport the produce from the revus (river bank) to Rajahmundry until he satisfies the Range Officer that he has fully paid up all moneys for felling and transport to revus due to each and every coolie engaged on the work of felling and transporting bamboos. In the event of any claims for payment of charges for felling and cutting bamboos being preferred against the contractor the D. F. Officer shall be at liberty to pay any such charges as are found to be actually outstanding and to deduct the amount of such payment or payments from the amount of the security deposited by the contractor."

the shape of forest produce. They take exorbitant interest for the money lent by them, which is repaid generally in kind at the time of harvest. The illiterate hillmen are at the mercy of the sowcars, and it is impossible for them to extricate themselves from their clutches." In an attempt to remedy this position the departmental purchase and resale of tamarinds was tried at Rampa Chodavaram by the Forest Department, but the merchants, whose profits were threatened used all their influence to wreck the scheme and succeeded in inducing the Reddis not to co-operate. Consequently the scheme proved a liability to Government, and was abandoned after the first year. Where merchants can exert pressure on the aboriginals by refusing further loans or demanding repayment of old debts, isolated measures like the one tried in Rampa Chodavaram must necessarily fail. This is recognized by Sathianathan in his comments on the break-down of the departmental purchase and resale of tamarinds: "......the scheme proved a failure, as the hillmen did not resort to it to the extent expected. The sowcar has a powerful hold on the hill people. What a Koya[1] needs is immediate cash and advances for various purposes like marriages, funerals and festivals. The sowcar, who has long experience of the mentality of the Koya gives him the advance only to take it back doubled in a variety of ways. The hillman believes the sowcar implicitly and is not educated enough correctly to understand the intention of Government."

Though often cheated over the value of their produce, and sometimes heavily indebted to both Malas and other merchants, the Reddis of the Rampa Country and the Northern Hills seldom sink into as complete a dependence on merchants as those of the Godavari valley. With at present little or no forest exploitation the Reddis sell as a rule only their produce and not their labour, and raise sufficient crops of their own to be independent of grain provided by merchants. Moreover the Government dues in the hill-*mutta* are so low that the need for money for paying them seldom throws the Reddi into the hands of the money-lender, and such debts as are incurred are generally due to the growing expenses of marriage feasts and other ceremonies.

There is thus little doubt that the economy of the Reddis in the hills, both south and north of the Godavari, is sounder than that of the Reddis in the river villages, who were until recently almost entirely dependent on the humour of the timber-merchants. Though they may be poorer in material goods and enjoy few of the newer luxuries, the people of the hills have preserved their economic as well as their personal freedom and are on the whole their own masters.

1. In a previous paragraph Sathianathan makes it clear that he refers both to Koyas and Reddis.

CHAPTER XV

# PROBLEMS OF ADJUSTMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

THE economy and to a lesser degree the social customs of the Reddis are today in a process of transformation, and in the two preceding chapters we have studied some of its causes and immediate results. Although retaining an economy distinct from that of their more progressive neighbours, the Reddis are no longer a self-contained unit, but depend for a number of necessities on economic relations with other populations. In the remoter hills, both south and north of the Godavari, these relations are casual, for there the wants of the Reddis are few and lack of communications has so far preserved them from being subjected to the interests of outsiders. In the easily accessible villages of the Godavari valley and the Rampa Country, on the other hand, the Reddis have had to adjust themselves to a new economic order and have come up against the interests and demands of economically powerful newcomers. It is here that the change, both in material conditions and social customs, is most rapid, and the course of future developments most difficult to predict. One fact is however clear: the Reddis of the Godavari valley already participate in a wider economic system and it is not a question whether this transition from self-sufficiency to inter-dependence is desirable or not, but by what means we can influence its course so as to avert existing and potential dangers to the Reddis' standard of living and social status.

All serious students of the aboriginal problem in India, or indeed in any part of the world, agree that contacts between primitive races and more progressive populations must be controlled if the interests of the primitive and economically weaker population are to be safeguarded. Tragic experiences in Oceania, America and certain parts of Africa have taught us the dangers of uncontrolled intercourse between populations of widely differing cultural level, and various administrative systems which in modern times have been devised in these continents aim at the protection of the indigenous populations from too sudden and radical a change, at the preservation of tribal culture and at the development of economic and moral self-reliance. In India, where backward and progressive populations dovetail and overlap, the establishment of an effective protection of the aboriginals is perhaps more difficult than anywhere else in the world. True, in most of the hill-tracts of Assam, in Bastar State and in a few other areas with predominantly aboriginal populations the administration is well suited to the



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needs of primitive tribes, but in the rest of India it has been necessary to compromise between the demands of the advanced section of the population and the interests of the aboriginals.

The necessity of devising special measures for the benefit of the aboriginal is, however, widely recognized and the realization of the importance of this problem has recently found expression in a number of official and semi-official enquiries into the conditions and needs of aboriginals. W. V. Grigson conducted such an enquiry in the Central Provinces,[1] D. Symington in Bombay Presidency,[2] and the Partially Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee in Orissa.[3] Though the investigators differed in general attitude towards the aboriginal and appreciation of tribal culture, they all came to the conclusion that the ordinary civil law does not afford primitive tribes sufficient protection from the exploitation by non-aboriginal outsiders and that only particular efforts on the part of the Administration can save the aboriginals from dispossession, proletarization and cultural and racial ruin.[4]

The present situation in the Reddis' country demonstrates the effects of uncontrolled contact between a primitive tribe and more progressive populations. Wherever I stayed in a hill-village, it struck me that the Reddis persisting in their old life as shifting cultivators and food-gatherers seemed on the whole both healthier and happier than those who lived in the open country in symbiosis with Hindu castes or were settled on the Godavari banks and engaged in forest labour. But despite the comparatively unfavourable position in which the Reddis employed by timber merchants found themselves for many years, it would be impracticable and futile to suggest that they should revert to their old and more primitive mode of life and withdraw from economic relations with the outside world. Forest labour is the obvious and easiest means by which a jungle-tribe like the Reddis can readjust a primitive economy to modern conditions and can obtain the money with which to pay land-revenue and purchase imported goods. However, work in the forest should not be allowed to oust cultivation and, by estranging the aboriginal from his traditional occupation, expose him to the dangers of unemployment and economic distress in times of depression on the timber market.

1. W. V. Grigson, I.C.S., *Notes on the Aboriginal Problem in the Mandla District*, Nagpur, 1940; 'The Aboriginal Problem in the Balaghat District,' Nagpur 1941; *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar*, Nagpur 1944.

2. D. Symington, I.C.S., *Report on the Aboriginal and Hill Tribes of the Partially Excluded Areas in the Province of Bombay*, Bombay 1939.

3. *Report of the Partially Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee, Orissa*, Cuttack 1940.

4. F. Kingdom Ward tells a similar tale from the borderland of Burma; writing of the Darus, a primitive hill-tribe near the Tibetan frontier he says: "The Darus are a vanishing race, doomed to extinction. Wild men need protection when encroached on by a higher civilization, just as wild birds and wild animals do, and the Darus are not protected. Not that anyone wishes to exterminate them, but everyone wishes to exploit them, and they cannot defend themselves. So they will perish." (*Plant Hunter's Paradise*, London 1937, p. 92).

All administrative schemes aimed at the stabilization and amelioration of the position of the Godavari Reddis must therefore be based on the recognition of both cultivation and forest labour as the principal factors in their economy.

Few will dispute the necessity of protecting the Reddi against the encroachments of outsiders on his ploughland and the various restrictions on Land Alienation should prevent any further transfer of permanent cultivable land to non-aboriginals. But it is only a minority of Reddis who possess any appreciable amount of ploughland and all those living in the hills as well as many near the Godavari subsist mainly on *podu* cultivation. This form of tillage is frequently criticized as wasteful and destructive; in most parts of India it is subject to many restrictions, and there have been frequent recommendations for its complete abolition on the ground that it leads to deforestation and soil erosion. This is not the place for a general discussion of the merits of shifting-cultivation,[1] but this much may be said that in the Reddi Country it has nowhere produced the ill-effects with which it is popularly credited, though the Reddis must have cut *podu* in their present habitat for thousands of years, few signs of deforestation or erosion are visible and practically the whole of their country is covered by dense forest growth. The population has always been so sparse that natural regeneration has kept pace with the Reddis' periodical fellings and little harm has resulted to either forest or soil. Experience has been the same in many parts of the world where small populations of shifting-cultivators were left in possession of large forest areas; the danger of deforestation is prone to arise only with the growth of progressive populations in the adjacent open country, which in expanding eat into the forest tracts and narrow the shifting cultivator's habitat. This is clearly brought out by G. V. Jack and R. D. Whyte in a study on soil erosion:[2] " Shifting-cultivation, although it kept men as unimportant servants of wild Nature, maintained soil-fertility indefinitely, since the forest drove the cultivator out and resumed its beneficent control as soon as any signs of soil exhaustion appeared. Continuous cultivation meant continuous depletion of the soil and always more deforestation to secure new land for the rapidly growing community and to replace worn-out soils."

In the light of these facts, it would seem that the restriction of *podu* to comparatively small and permanently demarcated areas near villages is a double-edged sword. For it forces the Reddi either to shorten the cycle of rotation and cultivate again and again on land which has not fully recuperated, or to prolong each individual period of cultivation in spite of the noticeable exhaustion of the soil. The dangers of such a course is described in the study quoted above: " Native

1. For a collection of facts and opinions concerning shifting-cultivation see Verrier Elwin. *The Baiga*, London 1939, pp. 100-106.

2. *The Rape of the Earth*, London 1939, p. 23.

custom was to clear and cultivate small forest patches for one or two years only and then move on while there was still sufficient fertility left to enable the forest to regenerate itself. When the period of 'shifting-cultivation' is prolonged......, fertility soon falls to a level below which natural regeneration will not occur. At the same time, the soil structure breaks down, and the soil is exposed to the exceptionally erosive force of the tropical rains."

Conditions in the Reddi country substantiate this view. Where *podu* has been unrestricted it has had little destructive effect on the forest growth, while the setting apart of too small an area for *podu* is leading to over-cultivation and irreparable deterioration of soil in the assigned area. Against the argument that *podu* is a wasteful method of agriculture it must be held that the Reddis find thereby a livelihood in areas where no other form of cultivation is possible and no other population could subsist. Moreover from the point of view of forest exploitation the presence of the aboriginals in their present habitat is of considerable value, since it guarantees a permanent supply of forest labour in regions so remote that the importation of labour from the plains would meet with considerable difficulties.

In a note on the aboriginal problem in the Samasthan of Paloncha written at the end of my first visit to the Reddi country I pointed out that the restrictions on *podu* and the oppressive rule of timber-merchants were causing a steady emigration of Reddis from Hyderabad to British India. It was then obvious that nothing short of a complete reversal of policy *vis-à-vis* the aboriginals could stop this emigration and remedy the Reddis' many genuine grievances. With this aim in view I submitted my recommendations which were summarized in the following points[1]:

1. The area limited by the State boundary in the north, east and south and a line roughly drawn from Narlaram on the Godavari through Tellapalli, the Jhanda Gutta, Gandhagudem and Anantavaram in the West, should be considered as an aboriginal area, in which the following measures should be given a trial. This area will include practically all Reddis of Hyderabad State as well as a number of Koyas.
2. Abolition of the system of hereditary *patwari* in so far as the indicated area is concerned. As a temporary measure the present *mali patel* should be made directly responsible to the Revenue Inspector and only they should be allowed to collect revenue. The *patel* should receive orders to measure all *podu*-fields annually (for the area actually cultivated often varies from year to year), and the permanent fields should be newly measured as soon as possible.
3. No permits should be necessary for the cutting of a new *podu*-field or for relinquishing an old one outside the Reserved Forest. A sufficient area for *podu*-cultivation should be allotted to each village; this area would

1. These proposals are rendered here in slightly abbreviated form and in a sequence differing from that of the original report.

have to be big enough to allow of the customary cycle of rotation, *i.e.*, about 10 to 12 years between each period of cultivation; otherwise the allotted area will gradually become deforested through over-cultivation.

4. The Reddis should be allowed to take timber and bamboo for their own requirements free of charge from the forest. No permits of the Forester or Forest Ranger should be required for house-building and fencing, since the necessity of such permits leads to the illegal collection of fees. The Reddi population is so sparse compared with the size of the forest area, that no appreciable damage to the forest can be done if the Reddis take timber and bamboos for their own use at their own discretion. The quantities required by them are in any case negligible compared with the annual export of bamboos and timber by merchants.

5. The Reddis and Koyas should be given the right of free chase with bows and arrows. They are much too busy with cultivation and bamboo cutting to deplete the stock of game to any dangerous extent. The present situation, in which they do hunt, but secretly and in defiance of the law and if caught have to pay a fine to the Forest Guard, is detrimental to their general morals. A three days' tribal hunt is moreover an essential part of the ceremonies of the Bhumi Devi Panduga, the feast that precedes the first sowing, and their firm belief that the crops cannot prosper without that hunt and the offering of part of the killed animals to the mountain deities should be respected.

6. The Samasthan authorities should consider whether the plough-tax and grazing fees in this area could not be reduced to the amounts collected in the Khalsa villages. Provision should at least be made that the Forest Guards and Foresters should not levy dues higher than those prescribed by the authorities. The collection of illegal dues could be prevented if the Forest Guards were only to count the cattle, while the village-headmen brought the dues to the Ranger's Office or the camp of the Ranger in a central village at an appointed time.

7. The most pressing problem appears to be the exclusion of the influence of the merchants and particularly that of Bora Krishnamurti. This could easily be effected by the refusal to grant any further cutting permissions. In the Reddi country there is no coupe system, but the taking of a permit is enough to allow of indiscriminate bamboo and timber felling. The cutting charge for 1,000 bamboos is Rs. 9 for *chilakara* quality, Rs. 12-8 for *bongu*, and for 100 logs of timber it is Rs. 10 *vasam*, (*i.e.*, below 24 inches circumference) and Rs. 12-8 *basu* (*i.e.*, more than 24 inches circumference). Thus the profit of the Forest Department in this field is comparatively small, and if the forest were to be exploited by Government and the Reddis paid daily wages, both Government and Reddis would profit. Still more desirable would be the establishment of a co-operative society such as exists among the Chenchus of Madras, and for which the Reddis, already accustomed to consecutive work, would be infinitely more suited than Chenchus.

   The excellent chances of such a co-operative society for the exploitation of bamboo and timber through Reddis—and possibly Koyas—may be seen from the following figures: the price realized for bamboos in Rajahmundry is according to quality and season Rs. 50 to Rs. 120 per 1,000 and the price for timber varies between Rs. 100 and Rs. 200 per 100; against these must be reckoned the Forest and Customs charges, the wages for felling, and the transport to Rajahmundry. The amount

for the different qualities are as follows:

| | Bamboos (*chilakara*) per 1000 Rs. a. p. | Bamboos (*bongu*) per 1000 Rs. a. p. | Timber (*vasam*) per 100 Rs. a. p. | Timber (*basu*) per 100 Rs. a. p. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Forest charges .. | 9 0 0 | 12 0 0 | 10 0 0 | 12 8 0 |
| Customs charges .. | 3 12 8 | 4 1 4 | 5 0 0 | 5 0 0 |
| Wages for cutting and transport to river-bank .. | 20 0 0 | 20 0 0 | 25 0 0 | 25 0 0 |
| Transport to Rajahmundry .. | 4 0 0 | 4 0 0 | 4 0 0 | 4 0 0 |
| Total .. | 39 12 8 | 40 1 4 | 44 0 0 | 46 8 0 |

If we assume such a conservative average for the price of bamboo as Rs. 70 per 1,000, the profits per 1,000 is more than Rs. 30, and the profits on timber is not less than Rs. 100 per 100 logs in view of the average price of Rs. 150.

A branch of the co-operative society embracing only Parantapalli and thirty households of Kakishnur, *i.e.*, 42 working men, could make an annual profit of Rs. 2,340 only on bamboo and Rs. 4,200 on timber, and the Reddis would get their proper wages of Rs. 20 per 1,000 bamboos. A contribution could be allotted out of these profits to the salaries of the secretary of the society and his clerks, the Reddis could pay for their own schools and a travelling dispensary, and would be in a position to pay their land revenue in cash. They would no longer have to work during the period of cultivation, and yet the fall in output due to their preoccupation at this time would not endanger the success of the scheme. The society may at first be restricted to the villages between Katkur and Parantapalli, *i.e.*, the major part of the Reddi area, including a considerable number of Koyas, and if successful could later be extended to other Koya areas. Even from this small area close on 70,000 bamboo and 10,000 timber were exported last year, though in that particular year many Reddis were employed for three months in cutting the boundary line between the Samasthan and Madras Presidency. The profits of the society would therefore necessarily amount to several ten thousands of rupees and the financing of schools and health campaigns would prove an easy matter.

8. Should it be impossible at this juncture to establish a co-operative society the exploitation of bamboo and wood should at least be taken over by the Samasthan Authorities and no more cutting permissions should be issued to individual merchants. It should not be difficult for the Samasthan to conclude a contract for the whole amount of bamboo and timber to be cut with a big firm in Rajahmundry. Then the individual villages could be given contracts for the supply of a fixed amount of bamboos and timber, and the cutting wages at the present rate of Rs. 20 per 1,000 bamboos and Rs. 25 per 100 timber paid in cash. In the first year it could be arranged to pay a quarter of the wages in advance, a quarter after the first month, a quarter after eight months, and the remainder at the end of the year, provided the village supplied the agreed amount. Since all the larger villages are accessible by launch

throughout the year, payment could easily be made to the village headmen by a responsible officer. The Reddis and Koyas could be trusted to divide the money honestly among themselves.

Part of the very considerable profit which would accrue from this procedure could be reckoned against the plough-tax and grazing fees of the Reddis and used for such institutions for the Reddis' benefit as schools and a travelling dispensary. Since their wages would be paid in cash, the Reddis would be able to pay their own land revenue and thus the influence of the merchants would be eliminated.

9. The existing village-headmen of the Reddis and in particular the tribal headman at Katkur should be recognized and re-instituted as the leaders of their villages. As soon as the Reddis can earn wages in cash these headmen can be made responsible for the collection of the land-revenue within their community, and they should be given a small fixed commission in recognition of their office.

   Once the system of responsible self-government is in action, it may be advisable to substitute the individual assessment of land revenue for *podu*-fields by a bulk assessment on the whole village land. A permanently fixed land-revenue payable by the village-community as a whole, such as is customary in the East Godavari District, would undoubtedly appeal to the Reddis and facilitate the work of the Revenue Authorities.

10. Schools for both Reddis and Koyas should be opened in some of the larger villages. Since both these tribes are no longer out of touch with the outside world, they should be given elementary education. In the East Godavari District there have been schools for Reddis and Koyas for the last 30 years. Some of the teachers are Reddis and in many villages adults are to be found who can read and write. If similar progress could be made in the Samasthan, most of the grievances of the Reddis in regard to the illegal collection of land-revenue and forest dues, and falsification of receipts would die a natural death. Five years ago the Dummagudem Mission opened a school in Katkur, but after two years it had to be closed owing to the opposition of the merchants, who forbade their men to send their children to school, threatening to withhold grain from those who disregarded their order.

    In the first instance it might be possible to recruit a few educated Reddis from the British side of the Godavari to act as teachers in the Samasthan, until Hyderabad Reddis are available for such posts.

11. Two toddy-palms should be allowed free of Excise duty to every Reddi and Koya within the indicated area, irrespective of the existence of people of other castes in the village.

12. All transfer of land from Reddis and Koyas to outsiders during the last twenty years should be reconsidered and wherever the circumstances warrant the land should be restored to the aboriginals.

13. Residence within the aboriginal area of non-aboriginals should be made subject to licence. A few families of Malas, Madigas Tsakals, etc., already residing in Katkur, Koinda and some other villages may be given such licences, but licences should be referred to merchants and their agents from the Madras Presidency.

These proposals were designed as a short term programme and did not contain any provision for the reconstitution of village-*panchayat*, the

encouragement of local crafts or the introduction of improved agricultural methods; for it appeared that a normalization of the Reddis' general social and economic position would have to precede all more ambitious schemes. The main points were the allocation of more land for *podu* cultivation, the exclusion of oppressive timber-merchants and the introduction of co-operative principles in the exploitation of forests by Reddi labour.

The orders passed some months later by the Court of Wards largely met the first two points, but the formation of a co-operative society for Reddis was not considered practicable. These Circular Orders of the Court of Wards for the Paloncha Samasthan of 16-9-1350 Fasli (June 1941) provided for many reforms in the administration of the Samasthan and included the following paragraphs of importance for future developments in the Reddi country:

1. *Reshuffling of Villages*: At present there are 70 villages and 483 hamlets in the Samasthan. Each village has several hamlets and some of the hamlets are at a considerable distance from the main village. Both as regards their situation and population certain of these hamlets deserve to be granted the status of independent villages. It was, therefore, necessary that several big hamlets should be converted into villages.

2. *Appointment of Patwaris*: The new villages will have new village officers who will not be given *watandari* rights. It will be the aim of the administration to endeavour gradually to appoint as village-officers representatives of the predominant caste in the village, *i.e.*, in the purely aboriginal tract the aim should be to get aboriginals.

3. *Tour*: The Divisional Officer should tour at least half the number of villages in the Samasthan in the course of one year. Cases of extortion or collection of *mamul* or of abolished cesses should be severely punished whether they are committed by village officers, police constables, forest or revenue employees.

4. *Podu Cultivation*: At present *podu* cultivation in the Samasthan extends over 2,937 acres. The Settlement Commissioner in his settlement report has proposed that an area equal to 8 times the present area under *podu* should be reserved for *podu* by rotation.
   The *podu* area on a rotation system in conjunction with the existing *podu* can be enlarged as proposed by the Settlement Commissioner with the proviso that where settled cultivation becomes established and is accepted by the village community, this should be encouraged by the grant of *patta* to the aboriginals on nominal assessments. This change will thus require the consent of the *podu* cultivators of the villages concerned, and no pressure is to be applied.

5. *Land Alienation*: No alienation of lands from aboriginals to non-aboriginals is at all allowed. Land Alienation Act No. 3 of 1349 F. has been promulgated in the jagirs under the Court of Wards through circular No. 9 of 1350 F.

6. *Grazing*: Hill Reddis should be allowed free grazing anywhere in their country.

7. *Collection of Taxes*: The present system is that a plough-tax of Rs. 3 per plough is collected from all the cultivators and they are allowed to

take non-*irsali* wood for their agricultural needs. Those who possess carts have to pay a tax of Rs. 2 per cart. House-tax at the rate of Re. 1 per house is taken from those ryots who do not pay any plough-tax. On the introduction of settlement, the old taxes, *i.e.*, house-tax, plough-tax, and cart-tax have been totally abolished.

3. *Extraction of Wood from the Forest for Agricultural Purposes and the Use of Minor Forest Produces*: The extraction of firewood and timber for bona fide agricultural and domestic purposes of the local residents from the open forest areas near the village should be allowed free, but not for export or sale. Reddis may cut and remove for their own domestic and agricultural purposes any forest produce excepting reserved trees. All timber and grazing in the reserves, outside the Reddi country should be paid for, and the coupe system with regulated fellings and approved contractors should be adopted as rapidly as possible. The Divisional Forest Officer should shift the enclosure lines of villages within the reserves. The boundaries of the reserves should be revised as pointed out in para 4. The selection method by permit system was prevalent in the Samasthan before the Court of Wards established its supervision. In view of the ruthless and unsystematic exploitation in the past, the Court of Wards found it necessary to restrict exploitation and pay more attention to conservation. The aim of forest policy is, as already stated, to introduce gradually exploitation by the coupe system. The cutting of timber by selection according to the girth of the trees has now been stopped, but bamboo is still being cut by the selection method. From next year onwards coupes and felling series should be made and auctioned.

9. *Forest Contractors*: A register should be maintained by the Divisional Forest Officer and the register should include only the names of contractors as approved by the Nazim Court of Wards. No fresh names should be entered without the Nazim Court of Wards approval. As far as possible bona fide *mulki* contractors should be enlisted. A clause should be introduced in the present agreement-bond according to which contractors will be bound to obtain a certificate from the Forest Ranger to the effect that wages at the prescribed rate have been paid in cash to the labour employed. Transportation of timber will not be allowed unless such certificates are produced. Besides forfeiting the security, the contractor will have his name struck off the register in case his dealings with the labourers are proved to be unfair. Contractors should make payments to labour in the presence of the Forest Officer whenever he is on tour in that area. He should tour at least once in four months and see that wages are distributed personally. Similarly the Revenue Divisional Officer should, while on tour, have the wages destributed in his presence and the Divisional Superintendent of Police should make inquiries in these matters and report all cases requiring notice. These officers should tour in such areas at least once a year and the tours should not be made at the same time but at well spaced intervals. Contractor Bora Krishnamurti's conduct was found not to have been satisfactory and his name should not be included in the list of approved contractors.[1]

Before the new policy outlined in these Orders could be enforced, I left the Reddi country, but the news of the check on the timber-

1. This was the principal timber-merchant in the Reddi country.

merchants' activities had already spread and the Reddis realized that here was their chance to break away from their hated masters. Encouraged to resist all more exigent demands on their labour, they devoted more time to their agricultural work and the crops were more promising than they had been for years.

Yet the outlook for the Reddis was then still far from rosy, and I was sceptical as to whether in an area so remote and so seldom visited by touring officers the mere promulgation of orders could bring about a radical change in a situation dominated by powerful vested interests. But at that juncture a new agency entered the scene: taking advantage of the Circular Orders, the Swami of Parantapalli, till then adviser and friend of the Reddis but powerless to bring them effective help in their economic struggle, embarked on a bold scheme for the Reddis' benefit. Backed by affluent devotees he arranged for the exploitation of forests on a co-operative basis by the Reddis themselves. When in the following autumn the bamboo and timber coupes came up for auction, Kopal Kanaya, the Reddi *patel* of Parantapalli, was dressed up in an immaculate dhoti, a new coat and a silk turban and, shepherded by the Swami's assistants, taken to the auction hall at Paloncha. The simple old man had little idea of what was going to happen, but he had been drilled to bid at the auction: at a given wink, he was to shout after any figure he heard called the words "ten more." This was a very necessary precaution, for Kopal Kanaya did not know how to count further than twenty and the four-figured sums that buzzed through the auction hall were utterly beyond his comprehension. Unperturbable, however, and repeating consistently "ten more," he secured at last the bamboo coupe near the villages of Parantapalli and Kakishnur for Rs. 2,200. The price of the coupe was paid from the Swami's funds and Kopal Kanaya returned to Parantapalli as a forest contractor. But he was not to reap more profits from the coupe which was nominally his than any other of his co-villagers: the Swami supervised the exploitation of timber and bamboo and the work proceeded on strictly co-operative lines.

The Reddis of Parantapalli and Kakishnur who went to work in "their" coupe were paid by piece work from funds advanced by the Swami, and the rate for felling and carting 1,000 bamboos was fixed at Rs. 35 as against Rs. 20, the highest figure which the timber merchants had ever paid even on paper. Above these wages the Swami provided the workers with grain, salt, oil, tobacco, clothes and other necessities and these provisions exceeded in value the cash wages. The principle underlying the Swami's co-operative scheme is that by their work in the bamboo coupes the Reddis should be able to obtain all they are in need of, and that no member of the community should ever have to deal with money-lenders. Weddings, the main source of the Reddis' indebtedness, were therefore financed from the common purse, and those men who possessed no draught animals, which are necessary for transporting

bamboos, were supplied with buffaloes; these animals, loaned to Reddis free of charge, will become their own after three years of work in the co-operative scheme.

Yet in spite of these benefits enjoyed by its members from the beginning of the work, the co-operative society was able to repay all advances given by the Swami, and closed the first year's account with a credit balance. The figures for income and expenditure show, if compared to those concerning the same villages of Parantapalli and Kakishnur under the regime of the timber-merchants, the striking change in the Reddis' economic conditions.

The total amount derived from the sale of 113,250 bamboos was Rs. 15,596.

Against this stood the following expenditure:

| | Rs. |
|---|---|
| Price of bamboo coupe paid to Forest Department .. .. .. .. | 2,200 |
| Cash wages paid to Reddis .. .. | 3,500 |
| Cost of 296 bags of grain for distribution among the Reddis .. .. .. | 3,675 |
| Cost of salt, oil, clothes, jaggery, expenses of Reddi marriages, etc., .. .. | 3,058 |
| Cost of 21 pairs of buffaloes handed over to Reddis .. .. .. .. | 650 |
| Export duty for bamboos .. .. .. | 700 |
| Transport of bamboos to Rajahmundry .. | 600 |
| Contingencies .. .. .. .. | 300 |
| Total .. | 14,683 |

Thus there remained a balance of Rs. 916 and, judging from the number of houses in the villages whose inhabitants were employed in the coupe, each household received in that year about Rs. 200 in cash and kind.

The results of this co-operative experiment seems to prove that my estimate drawn up for the co-operative exploitation of timber and bamboos in 1941 was not unduly optimistic. The effect of the scheme's success on the general atmosphere in the villages concerned has been far reaching. The Reddis, who two years ago wore little else than a few tattered rags, now possess dhotis and shirts and the women proper saris, though they do not wear this fuller dress when at work in forest and field. They are evidently better fed and jawari has entirely replaced the pith of the *Caryota urens* palm. In Parantapalli itself there are no more acute cases of yaws, for during the last years the Swami has arranged for a doctor to visit the village and give the full course of injections to all sufferers. More important than this material progress is,

however, the psychological change in the Reddis. The freedom from oppression and debt has made them more self-possessed and cheerful; they work now with the consciousness of reaping the full fruits of their labour.

Encouraged by the first year's success, the Swami decided to extend the co-operative scheme to a larger area and he arranged that in the auction for the Fasli year 1353 (1943/1944) Kopal Kanaya, acting again on behalf of his fellow tribesmen, should bid not only for the Parantapalli-Kakishnur coupe, but also for the coupe comprising the forest in the area near Tekpalli, Koinda and Katkur. The bidding was very high; vested interests tried to smash the Reddis' co-operative scheme and irrespective of commercial prospects pushed up the price. But the Swami's party remained undeterred and acquired the coupes ultimately for a total sum of Rs. 29,000. Most of the Reddis and a good many Koyas fall now within the area open for co-operative exploitation, and the change in style of living at first restricted to the vicinity of the Swami's *ashram* is spreading to most Reddi villages of the Samasthan.

So far the Swami's activities have lain primarily in the economic sphere, but there can be no doubt that he and his followers aim, beyond an improvement in the Reddis' standard of living, at reforms in social and religious matters. The principle of co-operation is to pervade the entire village life, and any member of the community in need is to be helped from the common funds. With this idea the Swami has persuaded the Reddis of Parantapalli to cultivate one *podu*-field collectively, sharing the work and the produce; and he has had them lay out a fruit grove with hundreds of mango, orange and lime trees which is intended for both the villagers and visitors from other villages. Men lacking cattle were provided with buffaloes and wedding expenses were made a responsibility of the entire community.

Marriage by capture is discouraged, but it does not seem that the Swami propagates any innovations in the wedding-ritual, or favours either child or adult marriage. Neither does he nor his followers interfere with such tribal recreations as singing and dancing.

But dearer to the Reddi than singing and dancing is the enjoyment of his palm-wine, and in this he finds no sympathy among the members of the *ashram*. The Swami believes, perhaps not unjustly, that too much palm-wine makes the Reddis lazy and violent, and beside preaching temperance he has set a price on every spadix of a caryota palm which the Reddis cut off before it yields the intoxicating juice. This has caused a great deal of bitterness among Reddis of hill-villages, and considering that palm-trees are private property it is, unless the owner does the cutting, of very doubtful legality. The abstinence from palm-wine may increase the Reddis' industriousness and prevent perhaps some drunken quarrels, but whether it has a beneficial effect on their health is open to question. Palm-wine contains a great deal of sugar in

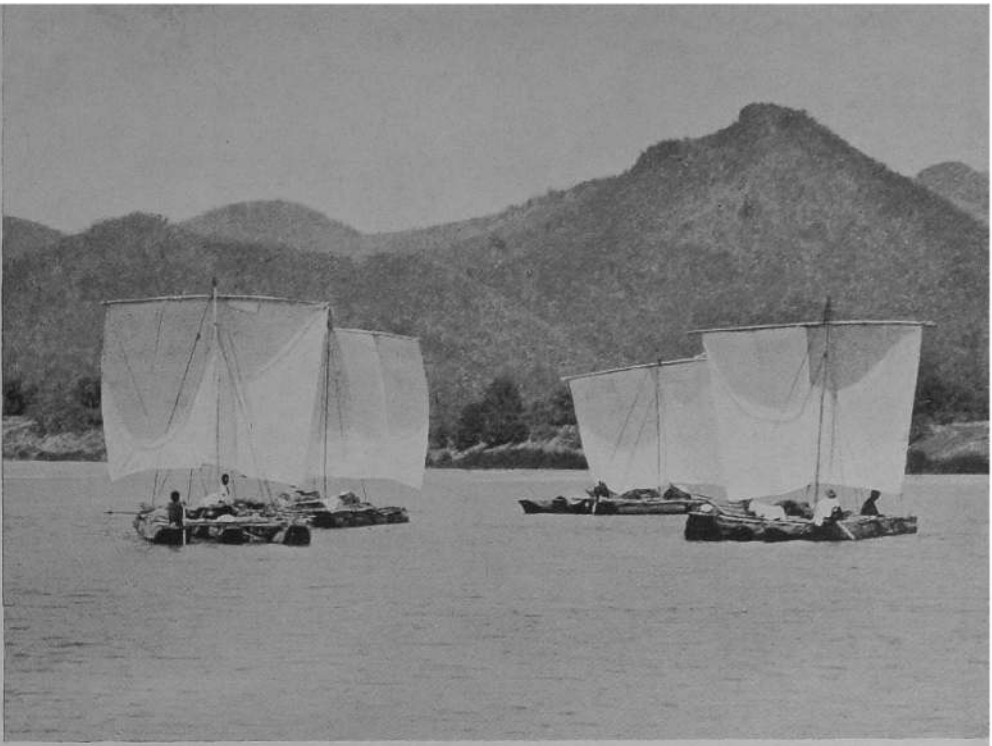


FIG. 81. The boats of traders plying up the Godavari.

FIG. 82. The Swami of Parantapalli with a group of Reddis in his hermitage.

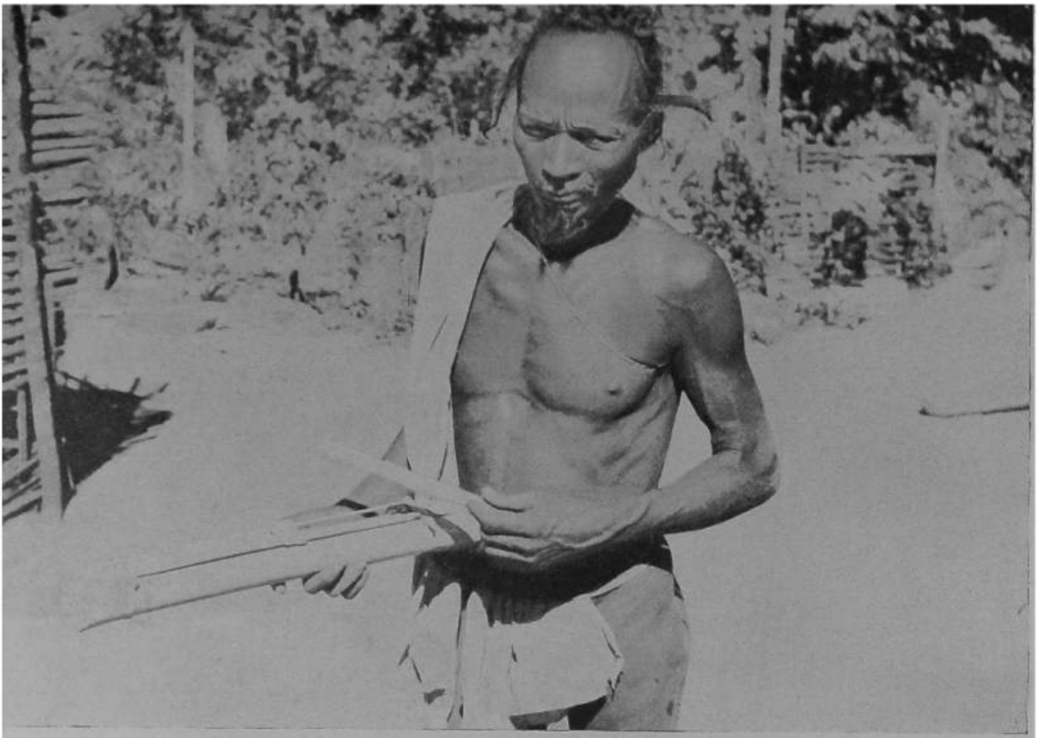
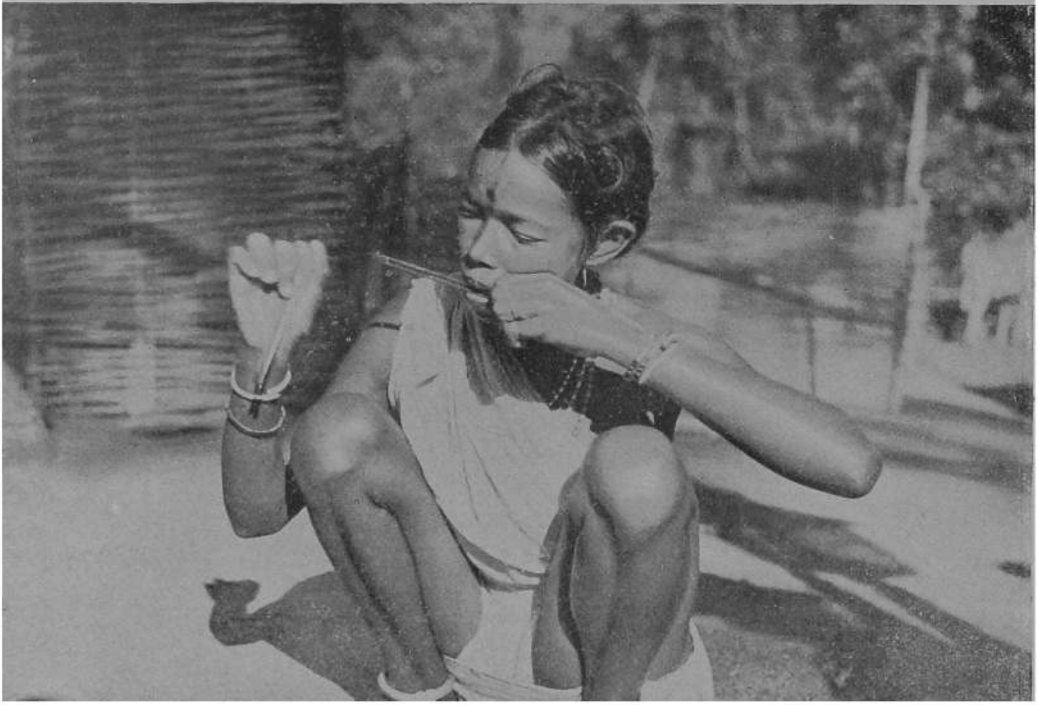


FIG. 83. Playing on a split-stringed bamboo instrument.

FIG. 84. Playing a Jew's harp.



which Reddi diet is otherwise deficient and is extremely rich in vitamin $B_1$; to forego it suddenly may seriously upset the balance of their diet. An experience in the Pacific, where the ban on palm-wine had disastrous effects on the natives of Nauru island should be remembered by all potential reformers and may here be quoted in the words of J. B. S. Haldane:

> "Nauru or Pleasant Island lies in the Pacific Ocean near the Equator, and contains large deposits of phosphate. So its inhabitants contributed to the world over-production of food by exporting portions of their native land. They were in the habit of drinking toddy made from fermented palm-juice and on occasion became very tipsy in consequence, which doubtless lessened their efficiency as excavators. Nauru is governed by Australia under a mandate from the League, and the paternal Government issued an ordinance forbidding the use of toddy. Perhaps the efficiency of the natives as labourers increased, but their infantile mortality rose to 50 per cent. within six months of this law coming into force.
>
> It was found that the children at the breast were dying of beri-beri, a disease due to deficiency of vitamin $B_1$. This substance is nearly absent from the rather monotonous diet of the mothers, but is present in large quantities in the yeast from which the toddy is made. The medical officer of health discovered this fact, and (doubtless after an appropriate delay) toddy was allowed again. The infant mortality immediately fell to 7 per cent. An account of the Nauru affair was given by Bray in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine for 1930.
>
> The situation in many areas of central India is quite similar. Large sections of the population are on the border-line of Vitamin $B_1$ deficiency, and suffer from time to time from mild beri-beri. In these circumstances adults generally survive in rather poor health, but breast fed children die. This dietary deficiency is at least to some extend supplemented by the use of toddy made from palm-juice......[1]

On a different plane lies the Swami and his followers' objection to the sacrifice of animals and their propaganda to substitute them by offerings of coconuts and sweetmeats. Here fundamental religious principles are involved and it is unlikely that the teachings of the Swami should not influence the Reddis, whose material welfare is so closely linked with the *ashram's* activities. It is to be hoped, however, that the discouragement of bloody sacrifices will not be extended to the eating of meat and in particular to the breeding of pigs, which is an important sideline of Reddi economics.

In the Reddis' eyes unpopular measures such as the ban on palm-wine and on animal-sacrifices on ceremonial occasions are obviously offset by the great benefits which they derive from the *ashram's* co-operative enterprise. No better proof of the appeal which the new order makes to the Reddis could be found than the return of a whole village-community from British India, where they had fled some years ago, to the vicinity of Parantapalli.

1. *The Inequality of Man*, London, 1938, p. 222.

The liberation of the Reddis from the tyranny and exploitation of unscrupulous timber-merchants is no doubt the most important result of the reforms initiated by the Circular Orders of 1941, but in other respects too there have been improvements. The abolishment of grazing fees and the grant of free timber and bamboos from open forests for domestic purposes has been an enormous boom for the Reddis and their Koya neighbours. At the time of my first visit they had been unable to fence their fields and the cost of rebuilding their houses was so high that many lived in badly delapidated huts. In 1943 I found gardens and fields near villages well fenced-in and the houses in good repair. For not only were the Reddis exempt from payment for timber, but in face of a more liberal policy *vis-à-vis* the aboriginals and the removal of many restrictions on the use of forest produce the subordinates of the Forest Department found little opportunity of levying illegal fees and dues.

Less progress has been made in the regulation of *podu*-cultivation. The Circular Orders provided that eight times the area then under cultivation should be reserved for *podu* by rotation, but the only changes of forest-boundaries carried out by October 1943 were the shifting of the forest-lines near Parantapalli and the demarcation of enclosure-lines round Kutturvada, Pantapalli, and Kunkulgoyapaka. All the other lines remained as they had been in 1941 and the situation was thus materially unchanged. While in some villages there was perhaps just sufficient land inside the enclosure to allow of a normal cycle of rotation, in others I heard the same complaints as before, and there are places where the Reddis, far from having at their disposal eight times the area then under *podu*, have only room for two or three alternative sets of hill-fields.

The most serious individual case of hardship occurred in the hill-settlement of Gogulapudi-Dornalpushe. The Reddis of this village used to form an independent and happy community, free from obligations to forest-contractors and merchants, and subsisting entirely on *podu* and the sale of basket-ware. When I stayed there in 1941, Gogulapudi-Dornalpushe and the nearby village of Jorumamulu lay in the Reserved Forest, but *podu* cultivation was tolerated. I doubt whether any forest officer had ever visited that remote area, where transport difficulties forbade commercial exploitation. Forest guards came occasionally to Gogulapudi to collect their traditional—and entirely illegal—fees, but did not interfere with the Reddis' cutting of *podu*. In the cold weather after my departure, however, the forest guard took a different stand and prohibited any further felling of jungle. The Reddis sought redress at the Ranger's Office, but there too they were told that in the Reserved Forest no *podu* was allowed. That year they cultivated on their old fields, but the soil was exhausted and the crops poor. When in the following year they were again forbidden to cut new *podu*, they saw no other escape from starvation than emigration to British India, where *podu* cultivation is allowed. The people of Dornalpushe moved across

the nearby State border to Uparpatla, three families of Gogulapudi found refuge in Mautagudem and the people of Jorumamulu went to live in Chintakonda. Only the *pujari* of Gogulapudi and his brothers and closest relations were unwilling to leave their ancestral home and the sites sacred to their gods; they stayed on and maintained themselves by gathering jungle-produce and selling basket-ware. Thus an erroneous interpretation of the Circular Orders had broken up a happy community and it was not until my visit in 1943 that the remaining inhabitants of Gogulapudi were again permitted to cut *podu*.

The tragedy of Gogulapudi on the one hand, and the extraordinary improvement in the condition of the Reddis engaged in forest labour on the other, are of general instructiveness. The Circular Orders of 1941 provided both for a change in the system of forest exploitation and for a liberal allotment of *podu* land to the Reddis dependent on shifting-cultivation. But whereas the rules legalizing *podu* remained largely ineffective, a local agency took advantage of the exclusion of the former forest-contractors and revolutionized the economic position of the Reddis in the Godavari valley. This suggests that the interests of aboriginals must be guarded by officers or non-official social workers on the spot; without their close and sympathetic supervision the most generously framed laws and regulations fail in their objective of benefiting the aboriginals.

There is no hope of improving a system of administration unsuitable for backward tracts by minor reform. The institution of hereditary, non-aboriginal *patwari*, was largely responsible for the alienation of the Reddis' land and their impoverishment through the collection of excessive land-revenue and several illegal cesses. During my last visit I found that, in spite of the admonishments of the Court of Wards, there has been no noticeable improvement in the conduct of *patwari*: practically uncontrolled in the assessment of revenue on temporarily cultivated land, they still charge the Reddis exorbitant sums for their *podu*-fields and extort money under various pretexts. Secure in their hereditary rights they defy or circumvent any inconvenient order of their superior officers, exploit the simple-minded aboriginals in the most unscrupulous fashion and side, in every dispute between Reddis and outsiders, with the more affluent party.

Equally unsatisfactory is the attitude of the police *patel* and *mali patel*,[1] non-aboriginals who usually live outside the Reddi country, and are in no way spokesmen and representatives of the villagers; they as well as forest guards, police constables, excise guards and other subordinates are outsiders, who treat the Reddis as inferiors and often exploit their ignorance and helplessness to their own advantage. With few

1. The police *patel* is responsible for the reporting of crime and disturbances, the *mali patel* for the collection of land-revenue; most Reddi villages lie within the jurisdiction of the police *patel* of Katkur; these Samasthan village-officers must not be confused with the Reddi headmen who are also described as "*patel*."

exceptions they show little interest in the welfare of the aboriginals and have no knowledge of tribal custom; but they frequently interfere in village affairs and thereby undermine the existing social organization. The authority of the hereditary headmen, the *kulam pedda,* and of the village *panchayat* is completely ignored, and many subordinate officials used to deal with the aboriginals through their masters, the timber-merchants. The consequence is that the Reddis show themselves disinterested in the maintenance of law and order, as is evinced by their attitude towards the murder cases quoted in Chapter X, and that they keep as much aloof from the representatives of the Administration as possible.

Experience among other aboriginal tribes proves, however, that this is not an unavoidable state of affairs. Given responsibility, the aboriginal is generally both willing and capable of co-operating with the Administration, and in districts like the Naga Hills it has been found possible to dispense with non-aboriginal subordinates altogether.

Responsibility can only be given in stages, however, and educational facilities must prepare the aboriginals for employment in certain posts. Among the Reddis of Hyderabad the first step would have to be the re-establishment of the authority of the headmen and the village-*panchayat*. If the village were to be recognized as a definite social unit, and the Administration dealt with the community as a whole and not the individual, it would strengthen the social cohesion of the community. The collection of revenue could then be entrusted to the village headmen, and it may even prove practicable to introduce bulk-assessment on the part of the village land available for temporary cultivation and leave the sharing out of both land and land-revenue to the villagers themselves. This form of assessment is in force in some river-bank villages in the East Godavari District where the community as a whole is responsible for the payment of a permanently fixed land-revenue, and it seems well suited to the mentality of the Reddis. We have seen that even where land is assessed individually several related families often combine, cultivating the land and paying the land-revenue in common. Such collective assessment would harmonize with the traditional Reddi idea that village-land is common property, owned by the whole community. Provision might be made that quarrels arising from the allotment of land and the distribution of the fixed land-revenue which could not be settled by the village-elders, should be submitted for arbitration to a council consisting of the *kulam pedda* and the headmen of several neighbouring villages, with a possibility of appeal to the tahsildar. Collective assessment of revenue on those parts of the village-land not held on *patta* by individuals would have various advantages: the administration would be immensely simplified, it would eliminate the possibilities of the extortion of illegal fees, and it would prevent outsiders from forcibly seizing Reddi land or circumventing the Land Alienation Act.

Moreover the management of their own affairs and the recognition of their village councils as responsible bodies would raise the Reddis' self-esteem.

Once this system is well established, and the individual headmen prove that they enjoy the confidence of their community and are capable of collecting the land-revenue, their responsibility could be extended. Like the *muttadar* of Chodavaram and Ellavaram, they could be entrusted with the maintenance of law and order in their villages and ordered to report all serious crime to the nearest police station, while minor offences between aboriginals could be left to the jurisdiction of the village-*panchayat* and *kulam pedda*. The powers of the *panchayat* will, of course, have to be clearly defined, but more instructive than a theoretical discussion of the functions which tribal jurisdiction of this kind can fulfil, will be the concrete example of the successful re-establishment of village-*panchayat* in an area close to the Reddi country. In 1932, the *panchayat* of the aboriginal population of Bastar State were confirmed in their power of jurisdiction in both criminal and civil cases of a certain order, and W. V. Grigson, who had initiated this revival of tribal rights, describes the new regulation as follows:

> "Under the State Order framed in 1932 by my successor, the regular criminal courts of the State have been deprived of jurisdiction over the primitive tribes in cases of certain public nuisances, simple hurt and assault, thefts (except of cattle) of property worth Rs. 5 or less, mischief, trespass, house-trespass, bigamy, adultery and enticing a married woman from her husband. The civil courts have been deprived of jurisdiction in claims of civil damages arising out of these criminal offences, and in simple money, grain and cattle claims up to Rs. 25 in value. All such cases are to be dealt with by the village panchayat, the convening of which and the selection of the elders of which are left to the village headman. No particular lines have been laid down to regulate procedure; the panchayats are not allowed to impose more than Rs. 25 as a fine, though in marriage cases they may allow marriage expenses up to Rs. 50, while corporal, barbarous or degrading punishments are prohibited; and the village kotwal or watchman at his periodic visits to the police station has to report the results of cases decided by the panchayats of his villages since his last visit. Any person dissatisfied with a decision of the village headman and elders can appeal within a month to the *pargana* headman, who is assisted by a panchayat of four headmen chosen every year by the assembled headmen of the villages of the *pargana* before the tahsildar. Though no orders were issued to regulate the disposal of fines, the headmen are encouraged to spend them on village improvements save where tribal custom prescribes a tribal feast as part of the penalty..........................Obviously a good deal depends on the personality of the *pargana* and village headmen, and on the unobstrusive sympathy and watchfulness of the State officials; regular inspection and would, of course, be fatal to the success of what is largely an attempt to defend the tribes from the visits of the petty official. In the Abujhmar hills and the parts of Dantewara and Jagdalpur tahsils which I visited in 1934, the headmen and elders greatly

> appreciated the relief which the orders had given from the burdens of police and court investigations, and the *pargana* headmen were taking their appellate duties seriously and fairly soundly. It is no use expecting formalism from such unlettered tribal tribunals; the rules as issued perhaps err a little on the side of formalism, and the panchayats must not be expected to follow them too strictly or blamed if at times they exceed their nominal powers, so long as rough, ready and cheap justice, within the comprehension of the villagers, results. Once the real leaders of the clans and villages learn that the State is trusting them and that they can trust the State also, the headmen and panchayats will be an admirable focus for the introduction and spread of measures of enlightenment.[1]

There is no reason to believe that a similar system could not work equally well among the Reddis now that the subversive influence of the timber merchants has been largely excluded. The powers which in Bastar are vested in the *pargana* headman, could in Hyderabad be exercised by the *kulam pedda,* and this should prove all the more feasible as the forefathers of the present *kulam pedda* used to serve the Rajas of Paloncha as police *patel,* and the appointment of a suitable member of his house to a responsible post would mean only the re-establishment of an old right.

The Reddis no longer live in isolation and as they progress materially they will come more and more in contact with other populations. It is therefore not sufficient to re-establish village self-government; to consolidate their social and economic position and save them from future encroachments by other castes, they must be given at least a minimum of education. No schools exist as yet in any Reddi village of the Paloncha Samasthan, but there are several primary schools for Reddis in villages on the left bank of the Godavari. In Posaram, a village opposite Tekpalli, for instance, there is a school, which at the time of my visit was attended by 22 pupils, both boys and girls; the schoolmaster is himself a Reddi, who was trained in Polavaram. Promising pupils are given Government scholarships of Rs. 9 per month and are enabled to attend the Higher Elementary School in Kunavaram and later the High School in Bhadrachalam. Some Reddis are already in Government employ as schoolmasters and forest guards, and I have heard of one Reddi who has set up as a forest contractor and takes coupes in the East Godavari District.

Thus we see that if given opportunity and stimulation the more progressive Reddis in the Godavari valley can undoubtedly be interested in education; it is therefore no Utopian idea that within a certain period village officers, forest guards and teachers could be recruited from the Reddis of the Samasthan, provided schools are established in two or three of the larger river-bank villages. But schools for aboriginals must be adapted to their general cultural background and economic condi-

1. W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, London, 1938, pp. 29.

tions, and the curriculum ought to be very different from that of an urban primary school. Instruction should be largely practical and teach the child such matters as will be of immediate use in his own environment. The problem of education for aboriginals cannot be discussed here at any length, but I am entirely in agreement with Verrier Elwin's idea that the principal aims of aboriginal education should be:

1. To conserve and develop aboriginal culture, religion and tribal institutions.
2. To equip the aboriginal to defend himself against those elements of civilization that threaten to destroy or to impoverish him and to take his place in this rapidly changing world and make his special contribution to it.
3. To improve his economic condition. Unless this third aim is fulfilled he can hardly derive any benefit from his schooling.[1]

Important as education may be for the aboriginal already in contact with progressive populations, it can do more harm than good if it alienates the children from their own homes and tribal culture. Education of aboriginals often results in encouraging the more ambitious and promising boys to aspire only to Government posts, and thereby the natural leaders of the aboriginals are frequently drawn away from their own community, particularly if they are then posted in places where they are subject to strong influences from other castes. Among the Reddis this could be avoided if some of the most intelligent boys were ultimately employed in managing the co-operative exploitation of bamboo and timber coupes.

To transform a tribe oppressed and exploited through decades into a self-respecting and prosperous community, able to stand on its own feet and manage its own affairs, is not the work of one or two years. Patient and sympathetic guidance is necessary to heal old wounds and gradually to build up the psychological as well as the material foundations of a healthy tribal life. The exclusion of the timber merchants and the Swami's co-operative enterprise have made a beginning in the Reddis' rehabilitation; but much remains to be done and village-self-government and education will be the indispensable stepping stones to a better future.

1. Verrier Elwin, *Loss of Nerve*, Bombay, 1941, p. 27.

## Part V.

# ETHNOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

## CHAPTER XVI

# THE REDDIS' PLACE AMONG THE TRIBES OF THE EASTERN GHATS

AFTER our digression into the sphere of modern economic and administrative problems, we can now return to the ethnological aspects of Reddi culture and attempt to establish its place among the other aboriginal cultures of the Eastern Ghats. The present relations between the Reddis and neighbouring populations described in Chapter XI are only the most recent in the age-old sequence of culture-contacts, and numerous are the cultural affinities that link the Reddis with aboriginal races in both adjacent and more distant parts of the country.

Let us first visualize the geographical position. The Reddis occupy the southernmost part of that section of the Eastern Ghats which stretches from the valley of the Mahanadi River south-westward as far as the plain between the Godavari and Kistna Rivers. These mountain-ranges are the home of a number of hill-tribes, and in the north the Reddis border thus on a compact aboriginal block. To the south, however, progressive populations have long filled the fertile interfluvial plain, driving a wedge between the aboriginal populations of the mountains flanking the Godavari and the primitive races of the Nallamalai Hills. Though the distance between the Reddis, as the most southern tribe of the aboriginal block between the Godavari and the Mahanadi, and the Chenchus as the northernmost group of the South Indian jungle-folks is only about 150 miles, this gap constitutes one of the major ethnographic boundaries within Peninsular India. There can, indeed, be little doubt that the advanced civilizations occupying the open country to both sides of the lower Kistna River have for a very long period formed an effective barrier between the aboriginal races of the northern and the southern massif of the Eastern Ghats: today the Reddis and the Chenchus belong to different ethnological spheres, but some aspects of both their racial and cultural make-up suggest a common substratum.

The Chenchus, a tribe of primitive food-gatherers, closely akin to many of the semi-nomadic jungle-tribes of Southern India, have been described in the first volume of this series, and a chapter on the cultural affinities between them and other races of similar cultural level provides part of the general background against which Reddi culture has to be viewed. Information on the northern neighbours of the Reddis, the hill-tribes of the Koraput District of Orissa and the Vizagapatam District

of Madras, on the other hand, is scanty and consists mainly of scattered notes by casual observers. No coherent picture of the various aboriginal populations in that region can be gained from the existing literature, and I therefore toured part of the contact-zone north of the Reddis' present habitat. Two months spent in the Koraput District gave me a fairly good picture of the Gadabas, Bondos and Dires, but the onset of the monsoon prevented me from extending my tour to the mountain country east of the Northern Hills, where the Reddis merge into other aboriginal tribes of whom little more than names and census figures can be learnt from the sources available. The solution of several ethnological problems in that region must await further investigations.

We have seen in Chapter I that the northern and north-eastern limits of the Reddi country do not coincide exactly with the boundaries of the East Godavari District, but that there is an overflow of Reddis into both the Malkanagiri Taluq of the Koraput District and the Gudem Taluq of the Vizagapatam District. In Gudem they are known as Konda Bagtalas, probably after their *muttadar,* who belong to the Bagata caste. The Konda Bagtalas live in the hills round Dharakonda in exactly the same style as the Reddis of the adjacent Northern Hills and resemble them also in physical type. How far Konda Bagtalas extend to the east, I am not in a position to say, they are not separately listed either in the Census Reports or in the Gazetteer of the Vizagapatam District, but it would seem that they live in scattered settlements among the hills between Dharakonda, Gudem and Lotugadda, while the population of the valley-villages in that area consists mainly of Bagatas and Malas.

Further north the densely wooded triangular hill-tract between the Sileru (Machkund) and Gurepreon Rivers extending along the Madras-Orissa border is today uninhabited, and serves as an effective barrier between the populations to either side. To the north beyond the confluence of the Machkund[1] and Gurepreon we enter a different cultural sphere. Though the hill-ranges to both sides of the Machkund are but the continuation of the ranges that we have described as the "Northern Hills," they are inhabited by tribes differing from the Reddis both in language and certain cultural characteristics. The people nearest to the Reddis, though now not in actual contact with them, are the Dires, or Didayis as they are called in the official usage of Orissa. They are a small tribe which in 1941 numbered only 1,661 individuals. They speak an Austroasiatic language akin to that of the Bondos[2] but most of them are conversant with Oriya. In physical appearance a certain resemblance to the Reddis is noticeable, but while the more primitive "ved-

1. Machkund is the name of the upper course of the Sileru.

2. I prefer to describe the tribe commonly referred to as Bondo Porajas simply as Bondos: the name Poraja is used for so many different tribes that it is apt to cause confusion. The Bondos call themselves Remo (literally men) and their immediate neighbours, the Gadabas, call them either Bondo or San Gadaba, which means "little Gadaba."

did" type seems lacking some individuals show a slight Mongoloid element.

Some of the Dire villages in the Machkund valley are fairly large, and here the Dires have taken to permanent cultivation and ploughing, but in the hills they live in scattered settlements of a few houses and subsist entirely on shifting-cultivation. This is evidently their original style of living. The hill-settlements are frequently moved and most communities have several alternative village-sites inhabited in rotation. As a rule land is regarded as the common property of the whole village community, and is cultivated in large blocks, but in the villages of the foot-hills, there is a tendency to develop individual proprietary rights in land. The Dires dig over their fields with iron hoes whose blades are shouldered and hafted by means of a tang inserted at right angles into the shaft. The small millets (*Panicum miliare, Panicum italicum* and *Eleusine coracana*) are broadcast, while pulses are dibbled into holes made with digging-sticks. The digging-sticks have small shouldered blades inserted into the shaft. The Dires do not grow *Sorghum vulgare*. In the hills cattle is only used for slaughter; cows are not milked, but beef is eaten at feasts. In some villages there is, however, no cattle; pigs, goats, chickens and dogs are here the only domestic animals.

The houses are built of wood and bamboo, and thatched with grass. They are generally oblong in plan with a closed-in veranda and an inner room. In most villages there is a special but inconspicuous building used as a boys' dormitory; the girls have no house of their own, but sleep in threes and fours in the houses of widows or old couples. Neither boys nor girls are supposed to sleep in their parents' house once they have reached maturity.

The Dires hunt with bows and arrows, and their bow is of the same type as the Reddi bow; but unlike the Reddis the Dires sometimes make the stave of the wood of *Grewia tilliaefolia,* instead of bamboo. The arrows resemble those of the northern Reddis and have like them a ruffle of coloured birds' feathers.

Dire women weave their own clothes using the same type of loom as their northern neighbours the Bondos, Gadabas and Parengas. Not so very long ago they used to spin yarn of bark-fibre, but now they weave cotton cloth, either bartering the thread from the plains or spinning yarn of home-grown cotton. In size and design their clothes are similar to those of Parenga women; they are about 20 inches wide and 40 inches long and are worn wrapped round the hips; a length of bazaar cloth knotted over one shoulder is today worn as bodice.

The main social units of a Dire village are the totemistic divisions (*bonso*) and the clans (*kuda*). Every village has a hereditary headman (*naik*) and a hereditary priest (*sisa*). The *bonso,* which run through the entire tribe, are exogamous, and each bears the name of an animal such as tiger, cobra, bear, goat, tortoise and monkey. The

members of a *bonso* believe in a vague relationship with their totem animal; members of the cobra *bonso* do not kill cobras and think that cobras will do them no harm, and members of the goat *bonso* do not eat goats, though they may keep and sell them. The *kuda* on the other hand are not necessarily exogamous, for branches of the same *kuda* may belong to different *bonso* and the two units of *bonso* and *kuda* can thus be compared to intersecting circles. Succession in all these units is in the male line and marriage is as a rule patrilocal.

The eldest or the most intelligent of the unmarried boys who sleep in the dormitory acts as leader of the village youth, and it is he who organizes the young people when boys and unmarried girls work together in the fields of individual villagers. Girls from other villages come on visits, and then they are invited to the boys' dormitory where they sing and amuse themselves with the boys; in the winter the boys visit the girls of other villages and on such occasions the young people engage in singing competitions.

Sexual intercourse between the unmarried meets with no social disapproval as long as it does not result in pregnancy. Marriages are sometimes arranged by the parents and sometimes by the young people. Bride-prices are substantial, but the custom compelling all villagers to contribute towards the bride-price when any young man of the community marries lessens the burden a marriage imposes on the individual family.

The Dires believe in a highest deity known under the Oriya name of Maprohu (Mahaprohu), but identified with the sun (singi), whom the Dires salute in most prayers. Moreover they worship various hill-deities, and in addition there is in every settlement a place marked with some small stones sacred to the village deity, Hundi. Another deity is Harijo (Arjun) who is believed to have been created by Maprohu. Unlike the Reddis the Dires differentiate between the shadow of a dead man (*seharem*) and the soul (*jivon*). The former lives at the place where the body was burnt, while the soul goes to its creator Maprohu in the sky.

These brief notes will suffice to show that Dire culture has much in common with what we have learnt to regard as the older type of Reddi culture, while some elements, and particularly certain characteristics of the Dires' social organization and religious beliefs suggest different affinities. Most of these elements are explained by the contact with the Bondos, the northern neighbours of the Dires, and with such other Austroasiatic tribes as the Gadabas and Parengas.

The Dire country borders immediately on that of the Bondos and villages of the two tribes lie at a distance of only a few miles. The difference in general culture, however, is considerable, and in passing from the territory of the one tribe into that of the other, one experiences a complete change of atmosphere. While the Dires of the hills live in

settlements of a few houses hidden in the forest, Bondo villages consist of forty to fifty houses crowded together on a mountain spur and are surrounded by cultivated land. Terraced rice-fields, irrigated by perennial streams fill every valley, and many of the gentler slopes have been taken under the plough. On the steeper hills the Bondos cut *podu* and dig over the soil with hoes, but the great density of the population has here led to a noticeable reduction of forest-growth. The villages are large and their permanency finds expression in the stone-circles and stone-platforms, that are used as council places and usually occupy a central position.[1] The Bondo has a strong attachment to his home village and does not easily emigrate or settle elsewhere unless he is seriously at variance with his own community. Every village is a ritual unit whose members partake of the same sacrifical food and do not intermarry; new settlers are not automatically accepted into the unit, but remain for ceremonial purposes and in regard to marriage regulation members of their paternal village.

The dignity of both village-headman and village-priest is hereditary, but if a headman does not enjoy the confidence of the community he can be deposed and another member of his family elected in his stead.

The principal social units apart from the village community, are the *bonso* and the *kuda* both of which are patrilineal. The *bonso* of the Bondos are called after animals; the tiger and the cobra-*bonso* are the most prominent. The *kuda* cut across the *bonso* system, neither *kuda* nor *bonso* are as strictly exogamous as the village community.

Both boys and unmarried girls have dormitories to which they repair in the evenings. These dormitories are not always separate buildings, but are often only walled off portions of ordinary dwelling-houses. During the rains companies of boys visit the girls' dormitories of neighbouring villages, and spend there the night in singing, playing and lovemaking. Engagements are generally arranged in these girls' dormitories, later to be followed by formal negotiations for marriage by the parents.[2] Wedding ceremonies are very elaborate and rich people provide buffaloes which after many rites are slaughtered by being cut into pieces while still alive in a manner suggestive of the sacrificial methods of the Ao Nagas of Assam. Bulls are sacrificed at memorial feasts, when a small dolmen is set up as a monument for the deceased.

The religion of the Bondos is dominated by the belief in a supreme deity called Singi-arke, *i.e.*, literally "sun-moon," but often addressed in Oriya fashion as Maprohu. He is considered the highest Bondo deity, and is occasionally described as "father and mother"; as a rule

1. Cf. my article *Megalithic Ritual among the Gadabas and Bondos of Orissa*, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, IX, 1943, pp. 149-178.

2. Cf. my article *Avenues to Marriage among the Bondos of Orissa*, Man in India, XXIII, 1943, pp. 168-172.

Singi-arke is worshipped only with prayers and not with offerings. In most villages there is a Hundi shrine, where the village-mother is periodically propitiated, while the earth deity is offered pigs once a year within the great stone circles in the centre of the village. Moreover various hill-deities, usually residing in sacred groves, must be propitiated and frequent offerings are also given to the spirit of the dead.

Bondo religion is rich in ritual and on the days of all important ceremonies work in the fields is strictly taboo.

Certain superficial similarities between the customs of Bondos and Dires are obviously due to the Bondos' influence on their more primitive neighbours; fundamentally the cultures of the two tribes are very different. The Bondos clearly belong, not only in language but also in culture to that large group of Austroasiatic peoples who in Neolithic times developed an advanced and complex culture characterized as it seems by the shouldered-stone celt, rice cultivation on terraced and irrigated fields, the art of weaving, the keeping of cattle for purposes of slaughter and sacrifice, and the erection of megalithic monuments in the shape of menhirs, stone-circles and dolmens. It is the culture which to some extent still survives among such Austroasiatic peoples as the Gadabas, Saoras, Mundas and Khasis and has close affinities to the Austronesian civilizations of the Malayan Archipelago.

The Dires, although they have assimilated some of the beliefs and social customs of their northern neighbours, show few of the essential features of Austroasiatic culture. The fact that they speak an Austroasiatic language is no criterion of their original position, for we know how easily a small primitive people can adopt or discard a language and just as in Central India many aboriginals have exchanged their older language for Aryan tongues, so the Dires seem to have come under Austroasiatic influence and lost their former language. Essentially they belong, however, to the same stratum as the Reddis, the stratum of primitive, semi-nomadic shifting-cultivators, who have not yet developed an agriculture sufficiently advanced to support a complex social and cultural structure and to allow of the concentration of larger populations in permanent settlements.

We are thus justified in regarding the Dires and Reddis as tribes of nearly related stock, who have been subjected to different influences: the Dires to that of an Austroasiatic population, and the Reddis, probably in much more recent times, to Telugu influence. Both have lost their original language, of whose nature we know nothing, but they have retained many of the essential features of their old economic and cultural life. There can be no doubt, that they represent one of the few remnants of a culture and race, much more ancient than the Austroasiatic peoples, the impact of whose southernmost advance-guard has given the Dires their present language and certain elements in their social organization, but who do not seem to have exerted any appreci-

able influence on the Reddis.

It seems indeed that the Reddis have always stood outside the sphere of the Austroasiatic races, who in Neolithic times impressed their language and cultural peculiarities on so large a part of Peninsular India north of the Godavari. This fact is also reflected in the Reddis' physical characteristics: the slight Mongoloid element, which is noticeable among the Bondos and to a much lesser degree among the Dires is entirely lacking among the Reddis.

Another of the aboriginal tribes now to be found in the hills on both sides of the Machkund River are the Konds, who have, in comparatively recent years, settled on land previously inhabited by Dires. The main area of their distribution is further north and north-east, and according to their own tradition as well as to that of their neighbours, they are new comers in the country bordering on the Reddi Hills. A short visit to their villages convinces one that there is a fundamental cultural difference between them and the Reddis. They build their houses wall to wall and under a common roof; two such long lines flank a large open space where cattle is tied to stakes or penned in wattle-enclosures. They are energetic cultivators, using both hoe and plough, and in this contact-area are notorious for the ruthlessness with which they have denuded large stretches of country of all forest growth. Gadabas and Parengas tell of invasions of Konds, who settled for a few years in their country and then moved on leaving soil and forest exhausted; and many Dires complain that they are being ousted from their lands by Konds, "who do not even spare jack-fruit and mango trees," when felling the jungle. The Konds are organized in totemic divisions, but have no clans comparable to the *kuda* of the Dires or the *gotram* of the Reddis.[1]

Their name is associated with the Meriah sacrifice, the public slaying of human victims, which in the past they deemed necessary for securing the fertility of their crops. The Konds speak a Dravidian dialect akin to Gondi and are on the whole of a more progressive physical type than the Reddis; there is no reason to believe that the two tribes have close affinities and their present geographical proximity is probably of comparatively recent date.

Less clear is the relative position of Reddis and Konda Doras, a tribe of over 85,000 of whom almost half are found in the Vizagapatam Agency and the Koraput District. Those I saw in the latter area struck me as very different from Gadabas and Bondos, and rather like Dires and Reddis, but I had no opportunity of visiting a Konda Dora village or collecting any first hand material. From what I learnt by hearsay, it appears that those in the hills subsist on *podu*-cultivation and the manufacture and sale of baskets, and this seems to substantiate the few references to Konda Doras in the literature, which suggest that they differ

1. These observations apply only to the southern groups of Konds, with whom the Dires are in touch.

considerably from the more advanced Austroasiatic tribes.[1] One section of the Konda Dora has totemic divisions like the Bondos and Dires, while others, and particularly those under strong Telugu influence have " house-names " like the Reddis. Though lack of reliable information makes it impossible to come to any definite conclusion, I am inclined to believe that the Konda Doras form part of the same ancient stock of primitive, pre-Austroasiatic shifting-cultivators to which the Dires and Reddis belong, and that whereas one section of the tribe came under similar influences as the Dires, the other, like the Reddis, adopted certain Telugu customs. A tour through the Gudem Taluq of Vizagapatam District and the Padwa Taluq of Koraput District would clarify the ethnological position of the Konda Doras; I would not be surprised to find that the Konda Reddis and Konda Bagtalas merge imperceptibly into Konda Doras and Konda Kapus and that all these names are but different designations for the same people.

Whereas hill-races with Austroasiatic languages inhabit the country north of the Reddis' habitat, Gondi-speaking tribes extend over a wide area to the west and north-west. The Koyas, the most southern branch of the Gond race, live today in the Godavari Region side by side with the Reddis but are everywhere considered the later settlers. Though both tribes have some customs in common, and particularly those which they adopted from their Telugu neighbours, they constitute distinct cultural units. The use of oxen and buffaloes both for meat and sacrifice, a tribal organization, whose ritual and ceremonial connects widely distant groups, the custom of erecting small stones as monuments for the dead, the putting up of a forked-post during the memorial rites, the use of bison-horn dance dresses, and the great importance of clan-gods are elements of Koya culture not shared by the Reddis. While the Reddis only speak Telugu, the Koyas speak Gondi; now Telugu is obviously not the original language of the Reddis, but they must have adopted it long before they were surrounded by Koyas, for it is improbable that the Koyas in the open country and the foot-hills should have retained their own tongue at a time when Telugu influence on the Reddis in the interior of the hills was strong enough to oust the old Reddi language. We know, moreover, that the Dravidian tongues, including such dialects as Gondi, were not originally the languages of primitive aboriginal population, but were imposed on the tribes of the jungles and the hills by progressive populations in the same manner as at a later date were the Aryan dialects.

If the Reddis, who are evidently much less advanced than the Koyas, were to belong culturally to the Gond complex we would expect to find close affinities between them and the Hill Marias, the most

1. Cf. E. Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 349: "Contrasting strangely, with the energetic patriarchal and land-reverencing Parja (Poraja) are the neighbouring indigenous tribes found along the slopes of the Eastern Ghats. They are known as Konda Doras, Konda Kapus and Ojas."

primitive of the Gond tribes of Bastar State. But the picture of Hill Maria culture as painted by W. V. Grigson in his book *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* is very different from conditions in the interior of the Reddi hills. The compact, large settlements, the attachment of the clans to particular tracts of land, the habit of storing considerable amounts of grain in communal granaries, the women's elaborate and abundant ornaments, and the men's distinct dance-dress, the custom of sacrificing bulls and erecting menhirs, all testify to a culture far higher developed than that of the Reddis, a culture partly suggestive of Austro-asiatic affinities. But what I consider even more important is the difference in agricultural methods. The Hill Marias, like the Murias, Bondos and Gadabas, use iron hoes for digging over their *podu*-fields while the Reddis, except those in the extreme north who seem to have learnt the use of the hoe from their northern neighbours, the Dires, do not possess hoes and use only the digging-stick for dibbling the great millet and pulses, while they broadcast the small millets in the unprepared ashes. This digging-stick cultivation constitutes, no doubt, a far more ancient stage in agricultural development than hoe-cultivation, and in Peninsular India it seems to be characteristic of a once widely distributed pre-Austroasiatic and pre-Dravidian population, standing between the primitive food-gatherers, such as Chenchus and certain jungle tribes of the south-west coast and the more advanced hoe-cultivators, such as Marias, Bondos, Gadabas and Mundas. Hitherto the ethnological stratum of the digging-stick cultures has received little attention, and a great deal of confusion has been caused by the practice of regarding all aboriginal cultures based on "shifting-cultivation" as of the same order and similar antiquity. Where the more advanced hoe-cultivators dominate the field, the last remnants of the older digging-stick cultivators were generally overlooked, and it is only in recent years that such tribes as the Baigas of the Central Provinces have been studied by anthropologists. The Kolams in the rugged hills between the Godavari and the Penganga, today scattered amidst the more progressive Gonds, seem to belong to the same group of ancient jungle-folks and like the Reddis they cultivate on hill-slopes and dibble most of their crops.[1]

These tribes have retained much of the heritage of the earlier races of food-gatherers and hunters. The chase and the collecting of wild jungle produce is still an essential factor in the economic system, villages are small and of no great permanency, though far less frequently shifted than the settlements of such tribes as the Chenchus; the land is common property of the village community, and no rigid social organization

1. During a recent tour in the Balipara Frontier Tract of Assam I discovered that the Eastern Daflas dibble hill-rice in holes made with long, pointed sticks, and it seems that some, if not all Abors cultivate in the same way. This difference between the tribes of the Himalayan foot-hills and those of the Naga and Lushai Hills has hitherto not been realized and it would seem that the secluded valleys of the Eastern Himalayas harbour agricultural civilizations of an extremely ancient type.

hampers the personal freedom of the individual, who may join now one and now another community. And in the field of material culture the bow and the digging-stick are, as of old, the most important implements. Yet, besides all these links with the past, there are revolutionizing new developments. Man has broken the chains of his complete dependence on nature and freed himself from the inexorable necessity of spending every day of his life in the quest for food. The raising of crops secures a comparatively stable basis of diet and the possession of fields leads to a more settled mode of life, which in turn renders possible the construction of solid houses, the acquisition of more substantial household goods, and the domestication of pigs and fowls.

There is practical equality between men and women, and marriage is frequently matrilocal, though descent is, at least nowadays, strictly patrilineal. Whether the clan organization in the form in which we find it among the Reddis of today was a general feature of those ancient agricultural civilizations, is more than we can say from the limited material as yet available, but it is probable that some kind of exogamous divisions, perhaps based on locality, formed the basis of the social structure. Life in small scattered settlements was not conducive to the development of strong chieftainship and the village headmen are little more than spokesmen of the community, in much the same way as the leaders of the local groups among food-gatherers. The institution of the hereditary priest on the other hand is a new element, intimately connected with the expansion and complication of ritual and ceremonies.

In the sphere of religion the differences between food-gatherers and the shifting-cultivators, as represented by Chenchus and Reddis, are far greater than in the structure of society. The development of agriculture gave rise to the cult of the Earth Mother, and instead of the conception of one supreme and fundamentally benevolent deity we find the belief in a host of hill-deities, whose wrath is easily aroused and constitutes a continuous danger to man. To avert and neutralise the dangers from the supernatural world, is the function of the magician, a personality without counterpart among the older hunters and food-gatherers, but of great importance in the cultures of primitive shifting-cultivators.

The Reddis of today do not represent in every respect the true picture of such a culture, for the contact with more progressive neighbouring populations has brought about changes in both the economic and the cultural sphere. Quite apart from such obvious innovations as the adoption of plough and cattle or the growth of large permanent settlements, there is and has been for many decades a slow infiltration of Hindu ideas; its more blatant results are the adoption of more elaborate forms of marriage-ritual, the cult of the village-goddesses, the development of caste-consciousness and the acceptance of the principle of untouchability.

But through the thin veils of Hinduism and Telugu custom stands

out the old culture of the Reddis of the hills and forests, a culture representative of perhaps the oldest agricultural civilization of the Deccan.

# APPENDICES

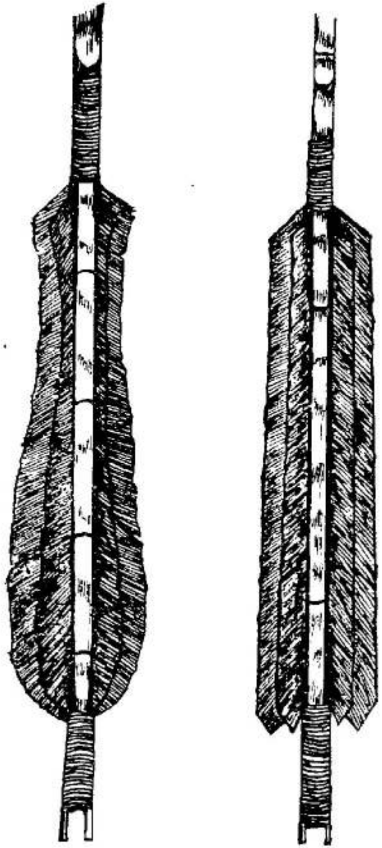


Fig. N. The feathering of arrows.

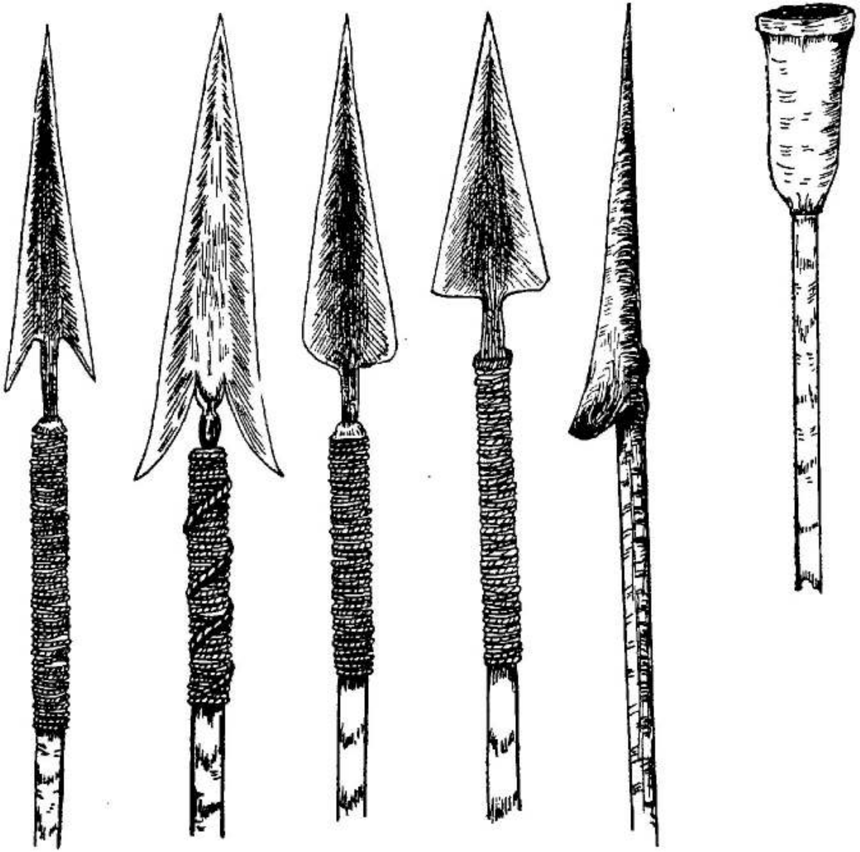


Fig. O. Metal and wooden arrow-heads.

# APPENDIX I

## MATERIAL CULTURE

The main features of the Reddi's material culture have been mentioned in the relevant context, but a lengthy description of each item would have been tedious; it is therefore more convenient to deal in a separate appendix with those aspects of material objects that are of interest only to the technologist.

The implements and household goods manufactured by the Reddi are not numerous and it would serve no useful purpose to describe in detail such articles as textiles, pots and ornaments, which he buys ready-made from outsiders. The general appearance of these and indeed of most of his material possessions can best be understood from the illustrations, and supplementary notes and measurements are required only for a limited number of objects which the Reddi himself manufactures.

### *WEAPONS AND IMPLEMENTS*

Bow. With small variations in size the same type of bow is used throughout the Reddi country. The stave (*inti bada*) is of split bamboo, the back shaved and slightly convex; the belly flat. The string (*neri*) is a sliver of bamboo with ends thickened to accommodate two or three stops. It is fastened to the stave by means of twined harness (*kotika*), made from *Bauhinia vahilii* or caryota fibre, slip-knotted on the string-stops and looped over notches in the tapering horns. In the Northern Hills, the string is sometimes reinforced by caryota fibre binding at the point where the arrow rests.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Stave: | Length .. .. .. .. | 152 cm. |
| | Circumference at centre .. .. | 10 cm. |
| | Circumference at horns .. .. | 5·5 cm. |
| String: | Length .. .. .. .. | 131 cm. |
| | Width .. .. .. .. | 5 mm. |

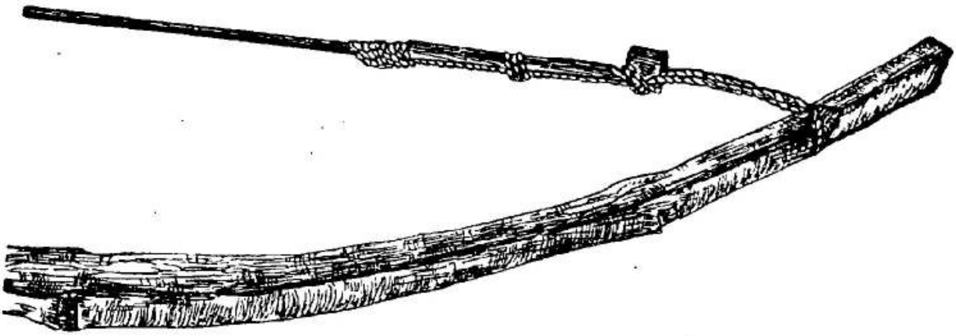


FIG. M. Fastening of the bow-string.

Arrows. Several types of arrows, both metal tipped and all-wood, are distributed throughout the Reddi country. The arrows are generally

longer and heavier in the Northern Hills. The shaft is of bamboo; the feathering of vulture, peacock or jungle fowl feathers. In the Godavari Region the wings are four or five, in the Northern Hills six in number; in both areas they are set radially to the shaft and pinned in position in two, three, or four places with bindings of caryota. In the Northern Hills the butt end of the feathering is finished with a ruffle of small coloured birds' breast-feathers. The notch is deeply and squarely cut in the butt. In the Northern Hills the notch is reinforced with a strap of peacock quill running over the bridge and secured to the shaft by bindings of caryota fibre. The metal tipped heads are of two varieties: the double barbed (*chilalam*) and the leaf shaped (*soba*). The heads are inserted into the shaft by means of a tang, and the bamboo secured against splitting by bindings of caryota fibre or narrow strips of animal skin. The all-wood arrows are of two varieties; the bird arrow (*mita*) with a cylindrical detachable bamboo cap, fitted over the head of the shaft; and the single barb (*badada gorpa*) arrow, the barb being fashioned from the head of the shaft.

*Average Measurements*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Shaft: | Length | 68–81 | cm. |
| | Circumference | 2 – 2.5 | cm. |
| Feathering: | Length | 13–15 | cm. |
| | No. of wings | 4 – 6 | |
| Heads: | Metal double barb | 11–15 | cm. |
| | Metal leaf shaped | 7–12.5 | cm. |
| | Bamboo *mita* | 5 – 7 | cm. |
| | Bamboo single barb | 10–12 | cm. |

Digging Stick: (Godavari Region: *tau karra;* Northern Hills; *gobu*). Used throughout Reddi country for unearthing edible roots; in the Godavari Region and southern Rampa Country used also for dibbling *zonna* on hill-fields. Shaft of undressed bamboo or wood. The flat, narrow, shouldered iron blade inserted by means of a tang, the head of the shaft secured against splitting by an iron ring or bindings of *Bauhinia vahlii.* (Figs. 29, 38, and F).

*Average Measurements*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Shaft: | Length | 120 cm. |
| Blade: | Length (excluding tang) | 7–10 cm. |

Hoes (*holwa*). Used only in the Northern Hills for scarifying hill fields after the sowing of small millets. Shaft of bamboo with head thickened to take shouldered blade, inserted at right angles to shaft by means of a tang which sometimes protrudes. Blade sometimes used alternatively in digging-stick. Fig. 39.

*Average Measurements*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Shaft: | Length | 100 cm. |
| Blade: | Length | 15 cm. |
| | Breadth at shoulder | 5 cm. |
| | Breadth at tip | 3 cm. |

Axe (*godali*). Used throughout the Reddi country. Generally carried

over the shoulder. Handle holed axe head, edge slightly curved. Handle of bamboo.

*Average Measurements*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Shaft: | Length .. .. .. .. | 50 cm. |
| Head: | Length .. .. .. .. | 18 cm. |
| | Breadth at edge .. .. .. | 6 cm. |

Knives (*kati*). Throughout the Reddi country the blades of all varieties of knives are of iron and hafted to wooden or bamboo handles by means of a tang.

Bill hook (*she kati*). Used throughout the Reddi country and serves as a general utility instrument, being chiefly used for lopping branches, splitting bamboo, and house building. It is carried stuck, handle upwards, in the belt. The blade is broad and curved, with the knife edge on the concave side; the handle thickens towards the blade. Fig. I.

*Average Measurements*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Handle: | Length .. .. .. .. | 28 cm. |
| Blade: | Length .. .. .. .. | 20 cm. |
| | Breadth at centre .. .. .. | 6 cm. |

Small bill hook (*pogal kati*) used in hewing and splicing bamboo for basketry.

*Average Measurements.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Handle: | Length .. .. .. .. | 17 cm. |
| Blade: | Length .. .. .. .. | 14 cm. |
| | Breadth at centre .. .. .. | 4 cm. |

Hip knife (*gita kati*). Used for trimming stakes and poles and splicing bamboo for basketry. Worn in the belt by small boys instead of a bill hook. Sickle shaped blade.

*Average Measurements*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Handle: | Length .. .. .. .. | 11 cm. |
| Blade: | Length .. .. .. .. | 16 cm. |
| | Breadth at centre .. .. .. | 2 cm. |

Reaping Knife (*emer kati*). Used by both men and women for reaping. Used also by women for preparing vegetables and fruit for cooking. Sickle shaped blade.

*Average Measurements*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Handle: | Length .. .. .. .. | 8 cm. |
| Blade: | Length .. .. .. .. | 9 cm. |
| | Breadth at centre .. .. .. | 1.1 cm. |

## *WOODWORK*

Apart from the shafts and handles of most iron implements, many of the Reddi's household goods are fashioned of wood. He is well versed in the selection of the most appropriate woods for each purpose. Axe, bill-hook and knife are his instruments for working wood; he does not employ fire for the hollowing out of such objects as troughs, drums or dug-outs, but he sometimes softens the wood before working it with a knife by pounding the pith with heavy pestles. Most objects are in one piece, fashioned from a log, but some Reddis have now learnt to manufacture such goods as cots and door-frames and to joint by means of sockets and mortice-holes and to rivet with wooden pegs. Except for the small relief carvings on the

hour glass drums and occasional geometrical incised patterns on small stools I have seen little decoration of household goods in the Godavari Region, but in the Northern Hills some *muttadar* and *munsif* ornament, or get ornamented, their door frames with friezes of geometrical designs.

Pounding Table (*mandaprol*). Used only in the river-bank villages of the Godavari Region for pounding grain. Generally made of *Odina wodier or Adina cordifolia.* Hour-glass shaped; pounding hole in upper face only. Fig. 51.

*Average Measurements*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Table: | Height | .. | .. | .. | .. | 65 cm. |
| | Diameter at rim and base | | | .. | .. | 50 cm. |
| Pounding hole: | Diameter | .. | .. | .. | .. | 20 cm. |

Pounding Block (*rol* or *gunta*). Used throughout the Reddi country, embedded in the floor of all houses for pounding and husking grain, and sometimes sago pith, etc., Generally made from *Odina Wodier, Bridelia retusia,* or *Adina cordifolia.*

*Average Measurements.*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blocks: | Length | .. | .. | .. | .. | 30 cm. |
| | Breadth | .. | .. | .. | .. | 30 cm. |
| Pounding hole: | Diameter | | .. | .. | .. | 20 cm. |

Pounding Trough (*toli*). Used only in these areas where the caryota palm abounds for pounding sago pith. Boat-shaped, hollowed from logs of *Adina cordifolia,* ends sloped off, bottom flat. Fig. 30.

*Average Measurements*

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall: | Length at base | .. | .. | .. | 80–100 cm. |
| Overall: | Length at rim | .. | .. | .. | 100–130 cm. |
| | Width at rim | .. | .. | .. | 40– 45 cm. |
| Overall: | Depth | .. | .. | .. | 40 cm. |

Drinking troughs (*toti*). Used throughout the Reddi country for watering pigs. Hollowed from small logs of *Bombax malabaricum* or *Odina* Wodier; the log is not trimmed nor is the bark removed.

*Average Measurements.*

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall: | Length | .. | .. | .. | 50–100 cm. |

Dug-out (*toti* or *doni*). Used only in river bank villages. Hollowed from *Bombax malabaricum* or *Mangifera indica;* ends sloped off, wood stripped of bark. Bamboo-outriggers are tied to either side to steady the craft.

*Average Measurements.*

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall: | Length | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3–5 m. |

Pounding pestle (*rokel*). Used for pounding grain as well as sago pith, dried mushrooms, etc., in pounding troughs, holes and tables. Generally made of *Acacia sundra.* Cylindrical poles, well and smoothly finished; metal tipped.

*Average Measurements.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Length: | .. | .. | .. | 125 cm. |
| Circumference: | .. | .. | .. | 20 cm. |

Stool (*pita*). Fashioned from single blocks of wood, sometimes with small feet 4-5 cm. high, cut in one with the seat. Generally made of *Adina cordifolia* or *Odina wodier.*

*Average Measurements.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Length of seat | .. | .. | .. | 40 cm. |
| Breadth of seat | .. | .. | .. | 25 cm. |

Spoons and ladles (*teddu*). Spoons hollowed from the solid are generally made of *pala* wood, the bowls straight sided with flat bottom. Ladles with basket or gourd bowls have bamboo handles. A tapering bamboo baton is used for stirring food while cooking.

*Average Measurements.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wooden spoon: Length of handle | .. | .. | 45 cm. |
| Depth of bowl | .. | .. | 3 cm. |

Measures (*sol*). Bamboo culms of sizes standardized to bazaar measures.

Cot (*nulku mancham*). Universal in the Godavari valley, but rarely found in the hills. Rectangular frame, four legs set with mortice hole and socket. Webbing either of plaited bamboo or diagonal mesh of bazaar twine.

*Average Measurements.*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Length | .. | .. | .. | 150–180 cm. |
| Breadth | .. | .. | .. | 70–122 cm. |
| Height | .. | .. | .. | 45– 55 cm. |

## *BASKET WORK*

Reddis are expert basket-makers and manufacture basket-ware not only for their own use but also for sale. The raw material used is exclusively bamboo, split into fine plaits and shaved smooth on a bamboo rest. The plaits are made in various widths and thickenesses according to the purpose to which the baskets are to be put. Reddis only practise plaited basketry, and work in check, twilled and open hexagonal weave. Rims and sides of baskets are strengthened with twined wicker work, or plaited plaits, while cradles and winnowing fans are finished and reinforced by bands of bamboo, secured with binding.

Collecting baskets (*ogele butta*). Used for fruit and root collecting. Made of check or twilled basketry, with one or two bands of twined wicker strengthening on sides and rim. Carried on the shoulder or by four carrying cords. Made in various sizes according to requirements, but never more than 50 cm. in diameter and 25 cm. in depth. Fig. 29.

Store baskets (*pedda gumpa*). Used for storing grain, mango kernels, or other kinds of food in the attic. Made of check or twilled basketry of thicker plaits than the collecting baskets. Used also for collecting mangoes and bamboo shoots. Sides strengthened and rims finished with twined wicker. No carrying strings. Sizes according to requirements, but never more than 90 cm. in diameter and 52 cm. deep.

Leaf-gathering basket (*palke butta*). Used for gathering leaves and jungle herbs; also for keeping current stores of grain in the kitchen as well as for spices, chillies or salt. Generally made of check or twilled basketry the rims finished with twined wicker, or plaited plaits; seldom has carrying strings. Sizes according to requirements but never more than 30 cm. in diameter, and 10 cm. deep.

Flat rectangular basket (*dangara* or *jila butta*). Used for drying sago pith, fruits, mushrooms and vegetables, such as beans. Smaller varieties used

as sieves. Made of loosely woven check or twilled basketry, upturned edges finished with twined wicker or plaited plaits. Sizes according to requirements, but never more than 116 cm. square; small sieves about 55 cm. square.

Open-work carrying baskets (*tigi butta*). Used for much the same purposes as collecting baskets but not so strong. Made of broad thickish plaits, in open hexagonal weave, rim finished with two interlaced plaits. Generally fitted with carrying strings and carried over the shoulder. Sizes according to requirements, but never more than 40 cm. in diameter and 36 cm. in depth.

FIG. P. Open-work carrying basket.

Fishing basket (*duri*). Used in the Godavari Valley for fishing. Made of thickish plaits, in open hexagonal weave. Hexagonal base, funnel necked and lip of stiff twined wicker-work. Sizes according to requirements, but never more than 25 cm. high.

Honey basket (*teni butta*). Used only in some hill-villages for pressing the honey from the wax. Basket bag made of check or twilled open weave; rectangular in shape with handles. Sizes according to requirements but never more than 36 cm. square. Fig. F. 3, (p. 68).

Basket boxes (*pette*). Used for storing clothes, tobacco, and ornaments and for carrying the wedding sari. Made of check or twilled basketry; large basket boxes are finished with double bands of split bamboo, small boxes with twined wicker or plaits. Basket-boxes are sometimes fitted with carrying strings and hung up in the house. Sizes according to requirements but never more than 100 cm. long, 10 cm. broad and 26 cm. deep. Small boxes about 35 cm. long, 20 cm. broad and 14 cm. deep.

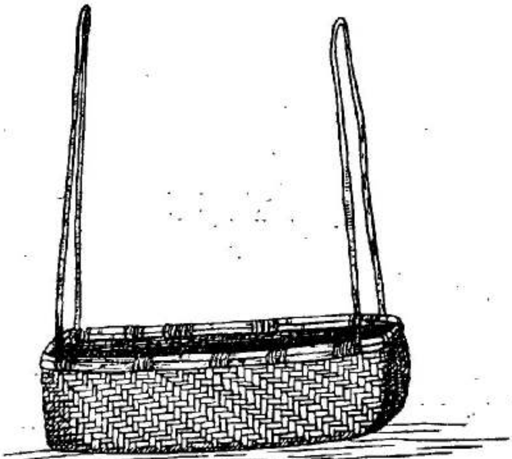


FIG. Q. Cradle.

Cradle (*wiyal*). Made of stout plaits in check or twill weave oblong in shape, with rim reinforced with double bands of split bamboo. Fitted with four carrying strings so that it may be hung up in the house or on a tree. Size generally about 90 cm. long, 40 cm. broad and 28 cm. deep.

Winnowing fans (*jalada*). Used to winnow and clean grain. Horse-shoe shaped, slightly flattened on top, made in check or twilled weave. Rim reinforced with two bands of split bamboo. Size, generally about 55 cm. across.

Mats (*chapa*). Used to sit, sleep and thresh on. Made in check or twilled weave, edges doubled in; no reinforcing. Check designs are sometimes made with green peel plaits, woven amongst the white.

## *MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS*

The musical instruments of the Reddis can be divided into three groups: instruments of percussion, wind instruments and string instruments. The first group is by far the most important; it contains all the instruments used on ceremonial occasions, some of which are peculiar to the Reddis and are not found among any of the neighbouring populations.

### *Instruments of percussion*

Drums: The Reddis possess two types of drums, both of which are hollowed of wood and double membraned. Though the Reddis are acquainted with the circular, one membrane drum and employ Madigas to play it at weddings, they neither make nor play this type themselves. Drums are the only instruments whose manufacture is accompanied by a ritual act. A Reddi when he has carved his drum shell and hollowed out the interior, but before he stretches the membranes over the heads, kills a chicken, and boring a hole in the shell with a red hot iron, pours a little blood into the shell, saying: "May this drum have a loud voice and sound ere we even touch it."

Hour-glass drum (*abzem*). Used at the great annual feasts, and subsequent dancing; carried on a cord over the shoulder, held obliquely, and played on lower face with the palms and fingers of one hand. Shell hollowed from single block of *Gmelinea arborea;* walls of shell oblique, standing at 75° to membranes, graduating at centre into a cylinder, which is sometimes ornamented by carved relief mouldings. Membranes of deer, nilgai or goat skin, stretched over bamboo hoops that are fitted over the heads and held in position by cords running along the whole length of the shell from head to head; the cords are braced at intervals with small bamboo bridges.

*Average Measurements.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Overall: | Length of shell .. .. .. | 110 cm. |
| | Circumference of shell at centre .. | 10 cm. |
| | Diameter of membranes .. .. | 24 cm. |

Cylindrical drum (*dhol*). Used at the great annual feasts and subsequent dancing. Carried on a cord round the neck in front of the stomach. Played with stick in left hand and palm and fingers of right hand. Shell of *Gmelinea arborea,* sometimes of *Caryota urens;* hollowed from single block, walls standing at right angles to membranes. Membranes of deer, nilgai or goat-skin stretched over cord-bound bamboo hoops, which are then fitted over the heads and held in position by cords running the whole length of the shell, and braced at intervals by small bamboo bridges. Drum stick (*dol sira*) made of *Gardenia turgida.*

*Average Measurements*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Drum shell: | Overall length .. .. | 68 cm. |
| | Circumference .. .. | 153 cm. |
| | Diameter of face .. .. | 48 cm. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Drum stick: | Length .. .. .. | 31 cm. |
| | Circumference at head .. .. | 11 cm. |
| | Circumference at handle .. .. | 6 cm. |

Dance Rattles (*gila bada*, or *gila kai guti*). Used by women at dances. Carried in the hand and shaken to emphasize the rhythm. Made of dried sword bean seeds halved and strung on jungle fibre twine. An average rattle comprises about 50 sword bean seeds. Fig. L.

Jews harp (*tonda ramma*). Made of a slip of bamboo, the tongue cut from the centre. Fig. 84.

*Average Measurements*

| | |
|---|---|
| Length .. .. .. .. | 10 cm. |
| Width at head .. .. .. | 3 cm. |
| Width at tail .. .. .. | 1 cm. |

*String instruments*

Two stringed lute (*kineri*). Occasionally found in the Rampa country and on the southern fringe of the Northern Hills but not in the Godavari Region. Played with bamboo bow, strung with fibre; finger board round stick; resonator halved coconut; membrane dried skin of nilgai or deer or goat.

*Average Measurements*

Finger board Length: .. .. .. 90–100 cm.

Split stringed instrument (*ronja gontam*). Found only occasionally in remote hill villages. Sound box: a section of a bamboo culm; two strings are formed by slicing off two narrow strips of bark, leaving the ends attached; they are tightened by small wooden frets wedged between strings and culm in three places: one at each end and one in the middle. No holes are cut into the walls of the bamboo. The strings are struck with a small wooden plectrum held in the right hand, and emit only one note.[1] Fig. 83.

*Average Measurements.*

Overall: Length .. .. .. .. 45–50 cm.

*Wind instruments.*

Bamboo flute (*pilam growi*). Found only in a few villages of the Godavari Region and on the fringes of the open country. Bamboo stem, with shelved mouthpiece and five stops.

*Average Measurements.*

Overall: Length .. .. .. .. 24 cm.

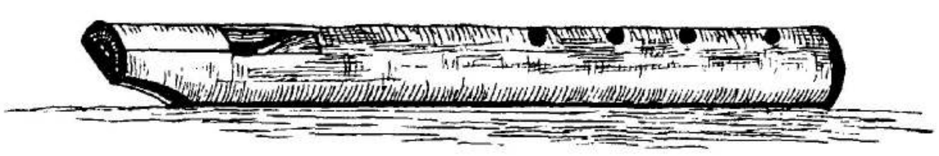


FIG. R. Bamboo flute.

1. This instrument seems to be comparatively rare in Peninsular India, but occurs in the Shan States and is common among the primitive tribes of Malaya and Indonesia; cf. A. M. Meerwarth, *A Guide to the collection of Musical Instruments exhibited in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.* Calcutta 1917, pp. 5, 6.

Pan pipe (*naga seram*). Two pipes of stout reed inserted into a bottle shaped gourd, and secured with resin. The lower reed is supplied with four stops, the instrument is blown vertically. Fig. 49.

*Average Measurements.*

Overall: Length .. .. .. .. 34 cm.

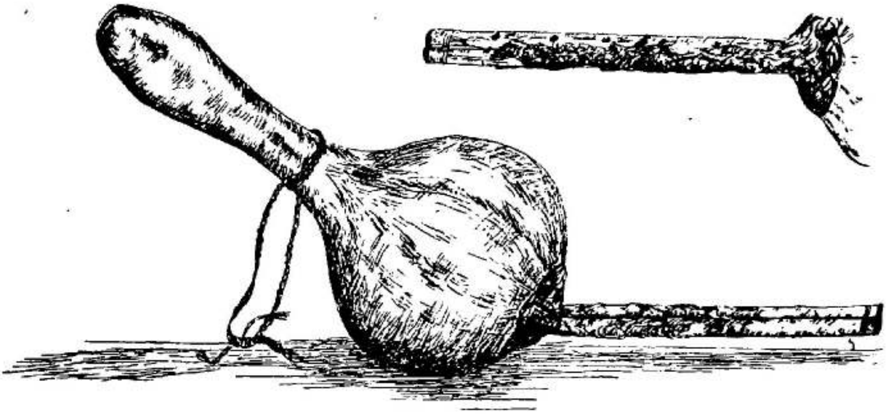


FIG. S. Pan-pipe.

# APPENDIX II

## REDDI RELATIONSHIP TERMS

*Terms of reference and address are identical unless otherwise indicated.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Father | *aya* |
| Mother | *amma* or *talli* |
| Father's elder brother | *pedd'aya* |
| Father's elder brother's wife | *appa* |
| Father's younger brother | *chin'aya* (or *babulu*) |
| Father's younger brother's wife | *chin' amma* |
| Father's elder sister | *appa* |
| Father's elder sister's husband | *bawa* |
| Father's younger sister | *chin'amma* |
| Father's younger sister's husband | *chin'aya* |
| Mother's brother (elder and younger) | *mama* |
| Mother's brother's wife | *atta* |
| Mother's elder sister | *pedd'amma* (or *pedda chin'amma*) |
| Mother's elder sister's husband | *pedd'aya* |
| Mother's younger sister | *chin'amma* |
| Mother's younger sister's husband | *chin'aya* (or *babulu*) |
| Father's father | *anna* (or *muk'anna*) |
| Mother's father | *tata* |
| Father's mother | *appa* |
| Mother's Mother | *appa* |
| Elder brother (m.s.)[1] | *anna* |
| Elder brother (w.s.) | *anna* |
| Younger brother (m.s.) | *chinnavaru* or name |
| Younger brother (w.s.) | *chinn'anna* or name |
| Elder sister (m.s.) | *appa* |
| Elder sister (w.s.) | *appa* |
| Younger sister (m.s.) | *chella* or *pilla* |
| Younger sister (w.s.) | *chella* |
| Elder brother's wife | *vodina* |
| Younger brother's wife | *vodina* |
| Elder sister's husband | *bawa* |
| Younger sister's husband | *bamardi* |
| Father's brother's son (if elder) | *anna* |
| Father's brother's son (if younger) | *chinnaru* |
| Father's brother's daughter (if elder) | *akka* or *appa* |
| Father's brother's daughter (if younger) | *chella* |
| Father's sister's son (if elder) | *bawa* |
| Father's sister's son (if younger) | *bamardi* |
| Father's sister's daughter (if elder) | *vodina* |
| Father's sister's daughter (if younger) | *mardelu* |

1. The letters m.s. and w.s. stand respectively for 'man speaking' and 'woman speaking.

| | |
|---|---|
| Mother's brother's son (if elder) | *bawa* |
| Mother's brother's son (if younger) | *bamardi* |
| Mother's brother's daughter (if elder) | *vodina* |
| Mother's brother's daughter (if younger) | *vodina* |
| Husband | *moguru* (addressed *voi*) |
| Wife | *penlam* (not addressed) |
| Wife's father | *mama* or *aya* |
| Wife's mother | *amma* or *atta* |
| Husband's father | *aya* |
| Husband's mother | *amma* |
| Wife's younger brother | *bamardi* |
| Wife's elder brother | *bawa* |
| Wife's younger sister | *mardelu* or name |
| Wife's elder sister | *vodina* |
| Husband's elder brother | *bawa* (or *aya*) |
| Husband's younger brother | *mardi* (or *aya*) |
| Husband's elder sister | *vodina* |
| Husband's younger sister (if elder) | *vodina* |
| Husband's younger sister (if younger) | *mardelu* |
| Son | *korku* (addressed by name) |
| Daughter | *bidda* (addressed by name) |
| Son's wife | *korela* |
| Daughter's husband | *aludu* |
| Son's wife's father (if elder) | *bawa* |
| Son's wife's father (if younger) | *bamardi* |
| Daughter's husband's father | *mama* or *aya* |
| Son's wife's mother | *chella* |
| Daughter's husband's wife | *appa* |
| Son's or daughter's son | *manamara* or name[1] |
| Son's daughter's daughter | *manamaru* or name. |

1. Grandsons are sometimes addressed as *tata*, which is the term used for the maternal grandfather, and granddaughters are sometimes addressed as *appa*, the term for grandmother.

# APPENDIX III

## VILLAGE CENSUS

### *A. HOUSELIST OF GOGULAPUDI-DORNALPUSHE.*

GOGULAPUDI

House 1. Golla LACHMAYA of Gogulapudi, *pujari* and *pedda kapu,* brother of Potaya (house 2) of GANGAYA (House 5) father of Gangamma (House 5).

1st husband: Golla KOMAYA of Kamaram, father's

1st s. (+).

2nd s. (+).

2nd wife: Kopal Gangamma of Gogulapudi of Golla LACHMAYA father's sister's daughter.

1st husband: Golla KOMAYA of Kamaram father's brother of LACHMAYA.

1st d. (+).

1st s. (+).

2nd d. Gangamma married to Gurgunta VIRAYA of Dornalpushe (House 5).

3rd wife: Gurgunta Bulamma from Mautagudem.

1st husband: Kechel GANGAYA of Mautagudem.

1st s. GANGAYA (4 years).

1st d. (+).

Kopal POTAYA of Gogulapudi, brother of Kopal Gangamma.

House 2. Golla POTAYA of Gogulapudi, *patel* of Gongulapudi, brother of LACHMAYA (House 1), GANGAYA (House 5).

wife: Boli Gangamma from Pandamamidigudem, sister of Boli KANAYA (House 2) and Boli KOMAYA (House 4).

1st s. GANGAYA.

2nd s. PANDAYA.

3rd s. REDAYA.

Boli KANAYA of Siddharam, brother of KOMAYA (House 4) brother of Gangamma (House 1) father's sister's son of Golla POTAYA.

1st wife: Kechel Gangamma from Katkur.

1st s. PENTAYA.

1st d. LACHAMMA.

2nd s. No name.

House 3. Boli GANGAYA from Chintakonda, grandfather's brother's son of KANAYA (House 1).

1st wife: Gongul Bulamma (+) from Chintakonda.
2nd wife: Patla Komamma of Gogulapudi sister of Gangamma (House 7).
1st s. POTAYA.
2nd d. Sitamma.

Gurgunta Lachamma from Chintakonda, mother of Komamma.

Gongul Viramma of Gogulapudi, mother of KANAYA (House 9) of LACHMAYA (House 7) and father's sister of KANAYA (House 8).

1st husband: Gurgunta POTAYA (+) of Siddharam.
1st d. Buli married to Gongul PANDAYA of Mautagudem.
1st s. LACHMAYA, lives in Mautagudem.
2nd s. KANAYA (House 9).
3rd s. LACHMAYA (House 7).

2nd husband: Sonkal LACHMAYA of Pusigudem (+).
1st s. (+).
2nd s. (+).
3rd s. POTAYA.

House 4. Boli KOMAYA from Siddharam, brother of KANAYA (House 1) brother of Gangamma (House 1), father's sister's son of Golla LACHMAYA (House 1).

1st wife: Andel Kanamma from Errametta.
1st s. (+).
2nd s. GANGAYA.
3rd s. BUCHAYA.

2nd wife: Kechel Chinamma of Koinda.
1st husband: Ventla GANGAYA of Chintalgudem.

DORNALPUSHE

House 5. Gurgunta CHINNAYA of Dornalpushe (originally from Pantapalli) brother of LACHMAYA (House 7), brother of KANAYA (House 9), father's brother of KANAYA (House 8).

wife: Divita Potamma from Venchela, sister of Lachamma (House 6).
1st s. VIRAYA married to Golla Gangamma of Gogulapudi daughter of LACHMAYA (House 1).
1st d. Pandamma.
1st d. Pandamma married to Patla GANGAYA from Chintakonda.
2nd d. Lachamma married to Golla GANGAYA of Gogulapudi brother of LACHMAYA (House 1) and Potaya (House 2).
2nd s. PANDAYA.
3rd s. CHINNAYA.
3rd d. Kanamma.

House 6. Gurgunta PANDAYA from Chintakonda.

1st wife: Kechel Chinnamma (+) from Gogulkonda.
- 1st s. DASREDDI (+).
- 1st d. Mukamma married to Kechel CHINAYA of Chintamreddipalli.

2nd wife: Divati Lachamma from Venchele, sister of Potamma (House 5).
- 1st d. Bulamma.
- 1st s. BATAWAYA.
- 2nd s. CHINNAYA.
- 3rd s. KETAYA.

House 7. Gurgunta LACHMAYA (+) from Pantapalli.

wife: Patla Gangamma from Mautagudem, sister of Komamma (House 3), daughter of Lachamma (House 3).
- 1st s. (+).
- 1st d. (+).
- 2nd s. CHINNAYA.
- 2nd d. Chinamma.

House 8. Gurgunta KANAYA of Dornalpushe, brother's son of LACHMAYA (House 7).

wife: Kechel Mutamma from Pantapalli.
- 1st d. Bulamma.
- 2nd d. Pandamma.
- 3rd d. Lachamma.

House 9. Gurgunta KANAYA of Pantapalli, brother of CHINNAYA (House 5), brother of LACHMAYA (House 7), brother's son of KANAYA (House 8).

wife: Gongul Bulamma from Bodair.
- 1st d. (+).
- 2nd d. (+).
- 1st s. (+).
- 3rd d. (+).
- 4th d. Pandamma.
- 2nd s. GANGAYA.
- 3rd s. PANDAYA.

## *B. HOUSELIST OF PARANTAPALLI.*

House 1. Kopal KANAYA of Parantapalli, *patel*.

1st wife: Suntre Subamma (+) from Daravada—divorced.
- 1st s. (+).
- 2nd s. (+).
- 3rd s. RAJAYA.

2nd wife: Buluvar Eramma (+) Parantapalli.
- 1st s. NARAINA (+) married to Pogal Gangamma, of Parantapalli, daughter of YENKAYA (House 2).

2nd s. RAMAYA (+) married to Murle Gangamma (House 7).
3rd s. (+).

3rd wife: Vinel Pandamma of Tandavada.
1st husband: Pogal TAMAYA from Kutturvada (+)
1st s. GANGAYA (+) married to Ventla Mangamma of Kollur now married to his brother RAMAYA of Kutturvada (House 1).
2nd s. RAMAYA (Kutturvada House 1) married to Ventla Mangamma of Kollur, his brother's widow.
1st d. Enkamma married to CHINNAYA of Srivaka.
2nd d. Chelamma.
3rd s. RAMAYA.

House 2. Pogal YENKAYA of Parantapalli, *pujari*, father's brother's son of RAMAYA of Kutturvada (House 1).

wife: Andel Mandamma from Tumileru.
1st s. (+).
2nd s. (+).
3rd s. (+).
1st d. (+).
2nd d. (+).
3rd d. (+).
4th d. (+).
4th d. Gangamma married to Kopal NARAINA (+) of Parantapalli, son of KANAYA (House 1). 1st d. Lachamma.
5th d. Lachamma married to Andel GANGAYA of Tumileru.
6th d. Subamma.
7th d. Potamma.

House 3. Kopal TAMAYA of Parantapalli, father's brother of KANAYA (House 1).

wife: Valla Kanamma of Parantapalli.
1st s. VIRAYA (lives in Balamamidi) married to Valla Lachamma of Srivaka.
1st d. Lachamma married to Vinel MANGAYA of Koinda
1st s. TAMAYA.
2nd s. YENKAYA.
2nd d. Yenkamma married to Valla VIRAYA of Kottagumma.
2nd s. (+).
3rd s. (+).
4th s. (+).
3rd d. (+).

House 4. Ventla POTAYA of Parantapalli, brother of Lachamma (House 9).
wife: Kopal Pandamma of Parantapalli, father's brother's daughter of KANAYA (House 1).
1st d. Ramamma.
2nd d. Pandamma.
1st s. TAMAYA.

Kopal Mangamma of Parantapalli, mother of POTAYA.
husband: Ventla LACHMAYA (+) of Parantapalli.

House 5. Vinel KANAYA of Parantapalli.
wife: Kopal Sitamma from Jidugumma, father's brother's daughter of Kopal KANAYA (House 1).
1st d. (+).
2nd d. Lachamma married to Kechel BOJAYA of Tumileru.
3rd d. Ramalamma.
4th d. Yenkamma lives with KANAYA'S childless brother in Balamamidi.
5th d. Gangamma.

Vinel RAJAYA of Parantapalli, brother of KANAYA.
wife: Murle Mangamma from Parantapalli, daughter of Kumalamma (House 8).

House 6. Kopal MANDAYA of Jidugumma, half-brother of KANAYA (House 1).
wife: Ventla Gangamma from Kollur, father's brother's daughter of Mangamma of Kutturvada (House 1).
1st s. LACHMAYA.
1st d. Bulamma.
2nd s. no name yet.

House 7. Vinel LACHMAYA of Kakishnur.
1st wife: Murle Gangamma from Kakishnur (+)[1].
2nd wife: Kopal Gauramma from Kondepudi.
1st d. Mangamma married to Kopal RAMAYA of Parantapalli (+) son of KANAYA (House 1).
1st s. GANGAYA married to Vinel Jinamma of Tandavada.
2nd s. RAJAYA.
3rd s. LACHAYA.
4th s. TAMAYA.
1st s. RAMAYA lives in Tandavada married to Kopal Jinamma of Kondepudi.
1st d. Valamma married to Kopal LACHMAYA of Kondepudi.
2nd d. Rajamma.[2]
3rd d. Jinnamma married to Vinel GANGAYA of Parantapalli.

1. Died before reaching maturity, but lived in her husband's house.
2. Married before maturity, still lives in Tandavada, her husband is Kopal GANGAYA, her father's sister's son.

House 8. Vinel RAJAYA of Parantapalli, brother of CHINNAYA of Kakishnur (House 1).
wife: Kopal Viramma of Parantapalli, (+) brother's daughter of KANAYA (House 1).
1st d. Gangamma.
1st s. LACHMAYA.

Vinel KANAYA of Parantapalli brother of RAJAYA and Kumalamma.
wife: Pogal Ramalamma of Parantapalli, elder brother's daughter of YENKAYA (House 2).

Vinel Kamalamma of Parantapalli, sister of RAJAYA and KANAYA.
husband: Murle YENKAYA of Tekpalli (+).
1st s. (+).
2nd s. (+).
3rd s. LACHMAYA.
1st d. Mangamma married to Vinel RAJAYA of Parantapalli (House 5).
2nd d. Kanamma married to Vinel TAMAYA of Kakishnur (House 23).

Murle BAJAYA of Parantapalli, sister's son of RAJAYA and KANAYA and Kumulamma.
wife: Vinel Durgamma from Kondepudi.

House 9. Kopal POTAYA of Tekpalli.
wife: Ventla Lachamma of Parantapalli, sister of POTAYA (House 4).
1st s. GANGAYA.
1st d. Pandamma.
2nd s. RAJAYA.

House 10. Ventla PAPAYA of Tekpalli, brother Lachamma (House 9) and POTAYA (House 4).
wife: Vide Lachamma from Irpuru.
1st s. (+).
1st d. (+).
2nd d. (+).
3rd d. (+).
4th d. (+) Gangamma married to Sintal BODAYA of Kakishnur (House 9).
2nd s. BAJAYA.

Vide Sitamma of Irpuru, Lachamma's brother's orphaned daughter.

## C. *HOUSELIST OF KUTTURVADA.*

House 1. Pogal RAMAYA of Kutturvada, son of Pandamma of Parantapalli (House 1), father's brother's son of RAMAYA (House 2).
wife: Ventla Mangamma from Kollur, widow of RAMAYA'S elder deceased brother.

House 2. Pogal RAMAYA of Kutturvada, father's brother's son of RAMAYA (House 1), grandson of YENKAYA'S (Parantapalli House 2), father's brother.

wife: Vinel Ramamma from Kakishnur, elder brother's daughter of LACHMAYA of Parantapalli (House 7).
1st d. Lachamma.
2nd d. Busamma.
1st s. CHINNAYA.
2nd s. TAMAYA.

## *D. HOUSELIST OF KAKISHNUR.*

RIVER-BANK SETTLEMENT.

House 1. Murle CHINNAYA of Tekpalli, father's brother's son of BAJAYA of Parantapalli (House 8) and brother of KANAYA and RAJAYA of Parantapalli (House 8), mother's brother of Kanamma (House 23).
wife: Gurgunta Pandamma from Chintapalli.
1st d. (+).
1st s. no name yet.
Gurgunta GANGAYA of Chintapalli, Pandamma's orphaned younger brother.

MIDDLE SETTLEMENT.

House 2. Buzar KANAYA of Kakishnur, *patel*, father's brother's son of GANGAYA (House 18).
wife: Kopal Lachamma of Teladibala, sister's daughter of Golla Viramma (House 5).
Sintel Rajamma of Kakishnur, mother of KANAYA.
husband: Buzar ZOGAYA (+) of Kakishnur.
1st d. Lachamma (+) married to Sintel CHINNAYA of Kakishnur (+).
1st d. Buchamma married to Buzar CHELAYA of Kakishnur (House 19).
1st d. KOMAYA.
1st s. LACHMAYA (+) married to Sintel Sitamma of Kakishnur, 1st d. Ramlamma.
2nd s. GANGAYA (+) married to Kopal Mangamma of Kondepudi, now married in Teladibala.
3rd s. KANAYA see above.
4th s. CHINNA KANAYA.
5th s. LACHMAYA.

House 3. Andel KANAYA of Kakishnur,[1] brother of SURAYA (House 4) and BODAYA (House 5).
wife: Dipa Buchamma from Koinda.[2]

House 4. Andel SURAYA of Kakishnur, brother of KANAYA (House 3) and BODIYA (House 5).

1. The Andel brothers emigrated to Kakishnur from Tumileru.
2. Brother-clan marriage.

wife: Murle Komaramma of Kakishnur, daughter of PENTAYA (House 12).
1st s. (+).
2nd s. (+).
3rd s. LACHAYA.
1st d. Bulamma.
2nd d. Potamma.

House 5. Andel BODAYA of Kakishnur, brother of KANAYA (House 3), and SURAYA (House 4).
wife: Sunkal Potamma from Tekpalli.
1st d. Gangamma.

House 6. Sidi KANAYA of Kakishnur, half-brother of KANAYA (House 10) and GANGAYA (House 13).
wife: Golla Viramma of Parantapalli, mother's sister of Lachamma (House 2).

House 7. Ventla TAMAYA of Kakishnur, brother of KANAYA (House 31).
wife: Golla Saramma of Tumileru.
1st d. (+).
2nd d. (+).
3rd d. Achamma married to Golla GANGAYA of Tumileru Saramma's elder brother's son.
1st s. GANGAYA.
2nd s. RAMAYA.

House 8. Vinel GANGAYA of Kakishnur.
wife: Valla Pentamma of Tumileru.
1st d. Nasamma.
2nd d. no name yet.

House 9. Kechel BAPAYA of Kakishnur.
wife: Valla Yenkamma from Potsaram.
1st s. (+).
2nd s. MANGAYA.
1st d. Lachamma.
2nd d. Bulamma.
Valla Gangamma of Potsaram, mother of BABAYA.

House 10. Sidi KANAYA of Kakishnur, half brother of KANAYA (House 6), brother of GANGAYA (House 13).
wife: Buzar Kanamma of Kakishnur, sister of GANGAYA (House ).
1st s. TAMAYA.
2nd s. POTAYA.
1st d. Lachamma.
2nd d. Sitamma.
3rd s. RAMAYA.

House 11. Buzar KANAYA of Kakishnur.
1st wife: Kopal Potamma from Kollur.
1st d. Sitamma married to Suntre VIRAYA of Kakishnur (House 28).

2nd d. Kanamma.
3rd d. Lachamma.
2nd wife: Kechel Sitamma from Borredigudem.
Buzar Kumalamma of Kakishnur, KANAYA'S father's sister.
husband: Gurgunta LACHAMAYA of Pantapalli (+).
1st s. (+).
2nd s. KANAYA see above.
3rd s. (+).

House 12. Murle PENTAYA of Kakishnur, father of Komaramma (House 4).
wife: Andel Gangamma of Tumileru, mother's sister of GANGAYA (House 13).
1st d. (+).
1st s. (+).
2nd d. Komaramma married to Andel SURAYA of Kakishnur (House 4).
2nd s. POTAYA married to Andel Mangamma of Tumileru, mother's brother's daughter.
1st d. (+).
1st s. (+).
2nd d. Pandamma.
2nd s. KANAYA.
3rd s. Kanamma married to Pita VIRAYA of Tekpalli.

House 13. Sidi GANGAYA of Kakishnur, elder sister's son of Gangamma (House 12), brother of Yenkamma (House 28).
wife: Andel Buchamma (+) of Tumileru.
1st d. Yenkamma.
1st s. LACHMAYA.
2nd s. KANAYA.

House 14. Kechel RAMAYA of Kakishnur.
wife: Ventla Buchamma of Kakishnur.
1st d. Gangamma married to Vala DEVAYA of Tumileru.
1st s. LACHMAYA married to Narpal Gangamma of Kanapuram[1].
2nd s. KANAYA married to Vala Potamma of Kakishnur (House 16).
3rd s. GANGAYA.

House 15. Sidi TAMAYA of Kakishnur.
wife: Narpal Bulamma of Kakishnur, sister of VIRAYA (House 20).
Sidi Lachamma of Kakishnur, sister of TAMAYA.
husband: Andel TAMAYA of Potsaram (+).
1st d. Mangamma married to Sidi TAMAYA of Potsaram.

1. Gangamma married before she was mature and came to live in her husband's house, but after she was mature, she went back to her home village and married another man.

2nd d. Buchamma married to Sidi RAMAYA of Potsaram.
3rd d. (+).

UPPER SETTLEMENT.

House 16. Valla BIMAYA of Kakishnur, brother of LACHAMAYA (House 17).
wife: Vinel Lachamma of Kakishnur.
1st d. Potamma married to Kechel KANAYA of Kakishnur (House 14).
2nd d. Kanamma.
3rd d. Jinamma.
4th s. GANGAYA.

House 17. Valla LACHMAYA of Kakishnur, brother of BHIMAYA (House 16).
wife: Ventla Lachamma of Kakishnur.
1st d. Saramma married to Ventla RAMAYA of Tumileru.
2nd d. Ramalamma married to Ventla SITAYA of Kakishnur (House 31).
2nd wife: Ventla Sitamma of Kakishnur.
1st d. Tsilkamma.
1st s. VENKAYA.
2nd d. Kanamma.
3rd d. (+).

House 18. Buzar GANGAYA of Kakishnur, *pujari* of Kakishnur, father's brother's son of KANAYA (House 2).
1st wife: Kanchen Gangamma from Kollur (+).
1st d. Ramalamma.
2nd d. Lachamma.
2nd wife: Kopal Andamma from Kondepudi.
Buzar Buchamma of Kakishnur, sister of GANGAYA'S father's sister.
husband: Sintal LACHMAYA (+) of Sintapalli.
1st d. (+).
1st s. (+).
2nd d. (+).
Buzar Viramma of Kakishnur, elder brother's daughter of GANGAYA.[1]

House 19. Sintal GANGAYA of Kakishnur.
wife: Buzar Dasamma from Chintapalli.
1st d. Lachamma.
1st s. TAMAYA.
Sintal BODAYA of Kakishnur, GANGAYA'S younger brother.
wife: Ventla Gangamma from Parantapalli, daughter of PAPAYA (House 10).
1st s. no name yet.
Buzar CHELAYA from Chintapalli, elder brother of Dasamma.
wife: Sintal Buchamma of Kakishnur, father's brother's daughter of GANGAYA.

1. Unmarried on account of yaws-disease.

House 20. Narpal LACHMAYA of Kakishnur, brother of Bulamma (House 15).
wife: Gurgunta Rajamma from Kanapur.
1st s. (+).
2nd s. CHINNAYA.
3rd s. GANGAYA.
4th s. PANDAYA.
1st d. Lachamma.

House 21. Kechel LINGAYA of Kakishnur.
wife: Ventla Paramma of Kakishnur.
1st s. (+).
2nd s. (+).
1st d. (+).
3rd s. GANGAYA.
4th s. MANGAYA.
2nd d. Chelamma.
5th s. MUKAYA.
Ventla LACHMAYA of Kakishnur, younger brother of Paramma.[1]

House 22. Buzar LACHMAYA of Kakishnur, father's brother of KANAYA (House 2), father's brother of GANGAYA (House 18).
wife: Kopal Devamma from Kondepudi.
1st s. (+).
2nd s. (+).
3rd s. GANGAYA married to Gurgunta Pandamma of Kakishnur.
Buzar Kanamma of Kakishnur, sister of LACHMAYA, and mother of Pandamma.
husband: Gurgunta KANAYA (+) of Kakishnur.

House 23. Vinel TAMAYA of Kakishnur,
wife: Murle Kanamma from Parantapalli, younger sister of BAJAYA (House 8).
1st d. Suramma.
1st s. RAMAYA.

House 24. Kopal RAMAYA of Kakishnur,
wife: Suntre Dasamma from Tekpalli.
1st d. VIRAYA married to Vinel Mangamma from Kondepudi.
1st d. Lachamma married to Narpal GANGAYA of Kakishnur, son of VIRAYA (House 30).
2nd s. TAMAYA.
2nd d. Bulamma married to Suntre RAMAYA (House 28).
3rd d. Kanamma.

1. Unmarried owing to yaws disease.

House 25. Kechel RAJAYA (+) from Pantapalli.
wife: Suntre Buchamma from Chintamreddipadu.
1st s. POTAYA.
2nd s. YENKATAYA.

House 26. Vinel CHINNAYA of Kakishnur,
wife: Murle Paramma, sister of CHINNAYA (House 1).
1st d. Lachamma.
2nd d. Pandamma.

House 27. Kechel MANDAYA of Kakishnur.
wife: Buzar Lachamma of Kakishnur, sister's daughter of GANGAYA (House 18).
1st d. Bulamma.
2nd d. Kanamma.
1st s. LACHAYA.
Kechel DASAYA of Kakishnur father of MANDAYA.
wife: Buzar Kamamma (+) of Kakishnur, sister of GANGAYA (House 18).
2nd wife: Buzar Kumalamma, of Kakishnur, sister of GANGAYA (House 18), sister of Kamamma.

House 28. Buzar POTAYA of Kakishnur,
wife: Sidi Yenkamma of Kakishnur, sister of GANGAYA (House 13), elder sister's daughter Gangamma (House 12).
1st d. (+).
2nd d. (+).
1st s. GANGAYA.
2nd s. TAMAYA.
3rd d. Pandamma.
4th d. Kanamma.
Suntre VIRAYA of Kakishnur, POTAYA'S elder sister's son.
wife: Buzar Sitamma of Kakishnur, daughter of KANAYA (House 11).
1st d. no name yet.
Suntre RAMAYA of Kakishnur, POTAYA'S elder sister's son, brother of VIRAYA.
wife: Kopal Bulamma of Kakishnur, daughter of RAMAYA (House 24).

House 29. Gurgunta DASAYA of Kakishnur.
wife: Kopal Pandamma of Parantapalli, elder brother's daughter of KANAYA (House 1).

House 30. Narpal VIRAYA of Kakishnur, *veju*,
wife: Sonkal Subamma from Gulanka near Koinda.
1st s. GANGAYA married to Kopal Lachamma of Kakishnur (House 24).
2nd s. KANAYA.
3rd s. POTAYA.
4th s. LACHAYA.
1st d. (+).

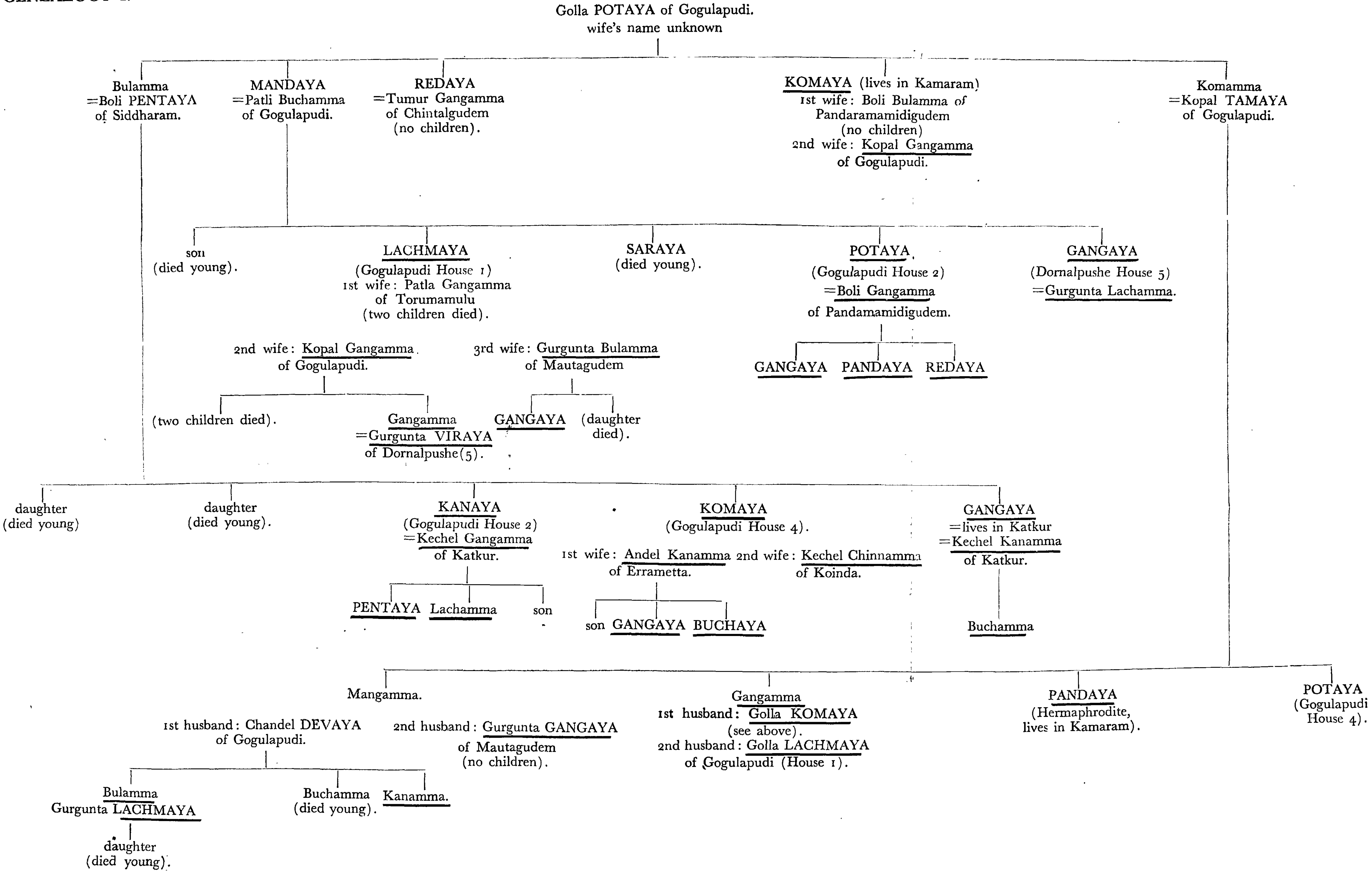
House 31. Ventla KANAYA of Kakishnur, brother of TAMAYA (House 7).
wife: Kechel Pandamma from Palamamidi Zelebu.
1st d. (+).
2nd d. (+).
1st s. RAMAYA.
Ventla SITAYA of Kakishnur, elder brother's son of KANAYA.
wife: Valla RAMALAMMA, of Kakishnur, daughter of LACHMAYA (House 17).

House 32. Vinel KANAYA of Kakishnur,
wife: Pogal Lachamma of Parantapalli.
1st d. (+).

# APPENDIX IV

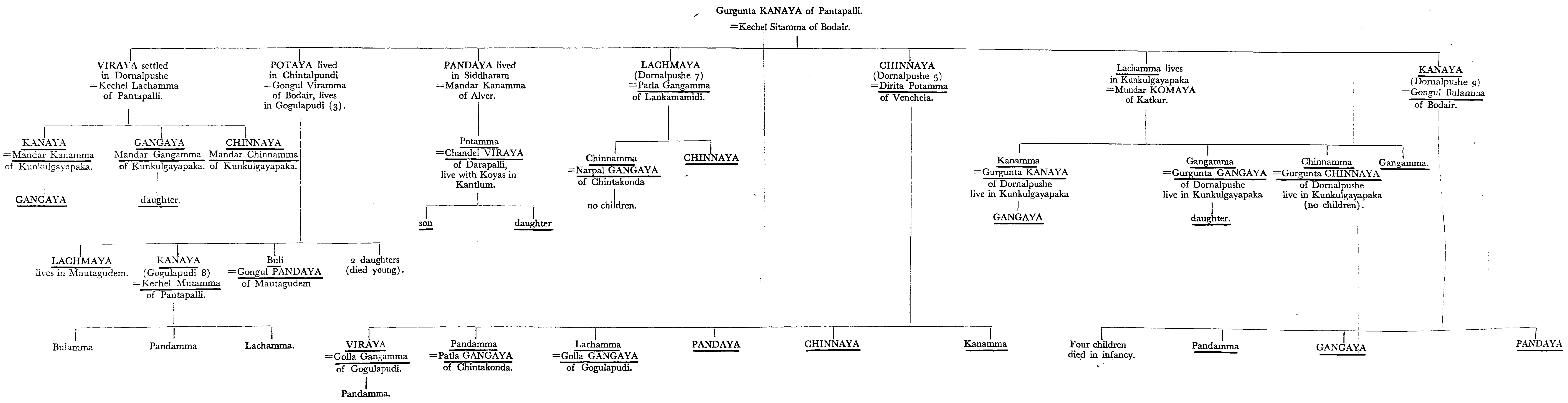
## Genealogies

GENEALOGY I.



Golla POTAYA of Gogulapudi.
wife's name unknown
Bulamma
=Boli PENTAYA
of Siddharam.
MANDAYA
=Patli Buchamma
of Gogulapudi.
REDAYA
=Tumur Gangamma
of Chintalgudem
(no children).
KOMAYA (lives in Kamaram)
1st wife: Boli Bulamma of
Pandaramamidigudem
(no children)
2nd wife: Kopal Gangamma
of Gogulapudi.
Komamma
=Kopal TAMAYA
of Gogulapudi.
son
(died young).
LACHMAYA
(Gogulapudi House 1)
1st wife: Patla Gangamma
of Torumamulu
(two children died).
SARAYA
(died young).
POTAYA
(Gogulapudi House 2)
=Boli Gangamma
of Pandamamidigudem.
GANGAYA
(Dornalpushe House 5)
=Gurgunta Lachamma.
2nd wife: Kopal Gangamma
of Gogulapudi.
3rd wife: Gurgunta Bulamma
of Mautagudem
GANGAYA
PANDAYA
REDAYA
(two children died).
Gangamma
=Gurgunta VIRAYA
of Dornalpushe (5).
GANGAYA
(daughter
died).
daughter
(died young)
daughter
(died young).
KANAYA
(Gogulapudi House 2)
=Kechel Gangamma
of Katkur.
KOMAYA
(Gogulapudi House 4).
1st wife: Andel Kanamma
of Errametta.
2nd wife: Kechel Chinnamma
of Koinda.
GANGAYA
=lives in Katkur
=Kechel Kanamma
of Katkur.
PENTAYA
Lachamma
son
son
GANGAYA
BUCHAYA
Buchamma
Mangamma.
1st husband: Chandel DEVAYA
of Gogulapudi.
2nd husband: Gurgunta GANGAYA
of Mautagudem
(no children).
Gangamma
1st husband: Golla KOMAYA
(see above).
2nd husband: Golla LACHMAYA
of Gogulapudi (House 1).
PANDAYA
(Hermaphrodite,
lives in Kamaram).
POTAYA
(Gogulapudi
House 4).
Bulamma
Gurgunta LACHMAYA
Buchamma
(died young).
Kanamma.
daughter
(died young).

GENEALOGY II.



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